

# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1898.

## AN AMERICAN ASPIRANT.

### CHAPTER I.

**F**EW of the muffled-up, mummy-like passengers reclining uneasily in their deck-chairs converted by the warring elements into dangerously perverse commodities could have imagined—had a nauseated consciousness permitted them to turn their patient eyes aside from the monotonous horizon of stormy sky and heaving sea—that the bright figure in the doorway of the ladies' saloon exemplified a reckless would-be gambler in nineteenth-century methods.

The figure was supple, girlish, and dashing. It was, too, essentially lady-like. Like a scarlet-breasted robin perched on a twig, it stood swinging itself lightly on two tiny feet. Its chin was thrown up. Its two large bright eyes mastered amusedly the pathetic avowal of the wind-swept deck, with its row of unlucky passengers. Obviously their reasoning was struggling against the saddening conviction of the poverty of science in general where sea-sickness was the cause in particular. The superb sweep of wind-swept ocean wildly tossed higher and higher as the elements roared responsively to the hiss of the on-coming storm, picturesquely emphasizing the maxim that what was poison to the sea-sick was meat to that bright on-looker.

With a glad little sigh of joy the girl stepped over the threshold of the saloon and stood lightly out on deck. With an irrepressible laugh of mischievous satisfaction two fur-gloved hands were lifted to settle more firmly a golf cap on a neatly coiffed head. Then the hands were plunged deeply into the pockets of a Redfern ulster. Priscilla set forth, head bent forward, shoulders thrown back, limbs sternly self-controlled, for a battle with the wind. The solitary figure paced the deck for some moments unmolested and undisturbed. The sea-sick passengers turned uneasily, shifted fretfully, groaned unmistakably, and finally, one by one, crept, a shivering, weather-beaten pack of cowards, below.

Priscilla was left alone. The little figure paced to and fro. A vivid color had sprung into the pale cheeks. The brown clear eyes were alight. The storm hissed and roared. The sea-gulls screamed. The screw, like a giant heart-beat, thudded out its dutiful, monotonous throb.

"I beg your pardon. How stupid of me! I beg your pardon."

"It's nothing," said Priscilla, mendaciously. Her hat was awry; her hands had been swiftly pulled from their pockets to ward off an unexpected force which had descended upon her like an avalanche. She was swaying, laughing and blushing, protesting but impotent, in the arms of a complete stranger,—a man with a strong, kind, beardless face and a pair of honestly repentant eyes.

"I did not see you," explained Priscilla. "My head was down."

"So was mine. I beg your pardon."

The stranger lifted his cap. His hair was crisp, curly, and cut very short. He was well set up. He had a pair of magnificent broad shoulders. Altogether he looked a desirable acquaintance.

Priscilla sighed. Only the night before, in the sitting-room of an imposing New York mansion in Fifty-Fifth Street, she had been holding forth, to a ring of breathlessly admiring brothers and sisters, on her pet hobby.

"If I had the world to make over," said she,—like most youthful and aspiring maidens, Priscilla was guilty of badly proportioned ambitions,—“if I had the world to make over, I should banish introductions.”

"Because?" Tom had questioned. Tom was the red-haired one. His family had denominated him the "interrogation point."

"Because," Priscilla had answered, in her fresh unstudied voice, "because I consider, since we are all of us God's creatures, introductions are bad form, ferociously bad form." Priscilla was wont to be a trifle exaggerated; "but then what is the use of adverbs if not to employ them?" she retorted, airily, when reprimanded,—to which original query no member of her adoring family had as yet discovered an adequate response.

"Why 'bad form'?" asked Harry.

"It's on the face of it," cried Priscilla. "Democracy is our portion. Why assume an aristocracy of manners, when we are a free country, and are supposed to ignore caste and to refute defunct issues?"

"Why, indeed?" chimed in Harry. He hadn't the slightest idea what Priscilla was "driving at," but then she was a "dear," and for some time he had advised his parents to let her "have her head;" so he repeated, non-committally, "Why, indeed?"

To-day Priscilla remembered the little conversation. Last night already seemed a long way off. She hugged the flattering unction to her soul at this highly opportune moment that her family had agreed with her in her broad views.

Her conscience therefore was perfectly free from a shadow of guile as she looked up innocently in her companion's face and questioned, with a natural curiosity born of the moment's loneliness and the rich promise of a future in unknown lands, "Going abroad?"



"Obviously," answered the man, laughing. His eyes twinkled irrepressibly.

"So am I," retorted Priscilla, delightedly. "Isn't it lovely?"

Her companion looked a trifle dubious. Then, with a perceptible effort not to dampen her ardor, he answered, "It depends upon what part of 'abroad' one is going to, somewhat, doesn't it? Where are you going?"

"To Paris," returned Priscilla, almost before he had gotten the words out of his mouth.

Her companion made a round hole of his lips and raised his eyebrows quizzically. Then he asked, nonchalantly, "Alone?"

"Oh, no," returned Priscilla, immediately, with perhaps unconsciously regretful emphasis on the "no." "Oh, no; there is Aunt Mildred, and Mary,—my little sister, you know," explanatorily.

There was a pause. The two commenced to pace to and fro rapidly.

"Paris, to me," began Priscilla, "is what America was—to Dickens."

"H'm," replied her companion, in a muffled voice. "Why not Columbus?"

"I prefer Dickens," protested Priscilla, obstinately.

"Dickens never discovered us," returned her companion, perversely.

"Far from it. Columbus discovered us."

"Well, as you please," acquiesced Priscilla, unwilling longer to prolong the ecstasy of the great moment which was to come. "Now, why do you suppose I am going to Paris? What do you imagine I am going to discover?"

"Can't imagine," answered her companion. His gray eyes caught her dancing ones for a moment, and he wondered unjustly why those well-groomed girls with the little feet and the long-lashed eyes didn't live in Chicago as much as in New York.

"I am going to Paris," announced Priscilla, in what in a man would have been denominated stentorian tones, but in Priscilla were only shrill and rich with cheerful possibilities,—“I am going to Paris to sing in Grand Opera.”

"Oh!" said her companion, shortly. Then he added, flippantly, in a tone charged with mirth, "The lack of novelty contained in the contemplated situation may be the reason why it strikes me as a very old joke. Otherwise I might believe you were laughing at me." The tone was deeply ironical.

"Laughing at you!" Priscilla shouted. The wind was blowing very hard, and she was obliged to approach her companion closely to make herself heard. "Laughing at you! It's you who are laughing at me. Why?" The slender figure was drawn up very straight. The man began to remember that, after all, girls' eyes in Chicago, and even in Philadelphia, were softer than these magnificent orbs which were blazing at him so defiantly.

He looked down at her sharply. Then he drew a long breath. "You don't mean to say you are in earnest?" he asked.

"Yes," said Priscilla.

"You are going to sing in Grand Opera. You? In Grand Opera?"

"Yes," said Priscilla.

"Easiest thing in the world, isn't it?" remarked her companion, sarcastically. "Just walk in and say to the manager, 'Here I am, old boy. Voice, beauty, family, fascination,—drawing card.' The manager is only too glad of such an opportunity. *That's* your idea, isn't it?"

Priscilla's cheeks were bright carmine.

"Of course," she began, lamely, "I know I will be obliged to work very hard. But my voice is a natural voice, a perfectly natural voice. It requires very little tuition. My teacher in New York told me so; besides, it has an individual *timbre*—quality, you know,"—as her companion remained stolidly unimpressed. She stopped.

They had begun walking to and fro again.

"I wonder," began the man, a little gruffly, "if you will be very angry with me if I ask you a question; if you will think me impertinent?"

"No," returned Priscilla, earnestly. "No, indeed. I think, I know already, that you and I will be very good friends; because, you see, we have both begun by speaking the exact truth to one another. I hate lies," she added, irrelevantly.

Her companion did not appear to have heard her.

"What is the question you wish to ask me?" demanded Priscilla, curiously.

"Let's go and lean over the railing there for a moment," said the man.

When they were comfortably ensconced, with a wall of coiled rope behind them, the green billows ahead, her companion spoke.

"Are you poor?" he asked, gently.

"Oh, no," said Priscilla.

"Then why, in the name of everything beautiful, do you wish to sing in Grand Opera?"

"Well," said Priscilla, comfortably, "I'll tell you why. You see, my friends think it's such a pity a voice like mine should be lost. It's so sweet. You've no idea how very sweet it is. I love to listen to it myself. You shall hear it some day." She made this promise so naïvely that her companion contemplated her for one moment directly, and then as directly desisted.

"Women," said he, a trifle awkwardly,—he disliked sickly sentimentality,—“women have been known to sing to their babies very successfully,—so sweetly as to put them to sleep.”

"Yes," answered Priscilla, simply; "but, you see, I have no babies."

There was a pause.

"But the poor girls," her companion began,—“how about all the poor girls who are endeavoring to obtain a hearing? Don't you think it is rather selfish of you to seek to crowd them out?”

Priscilla's rosy chin was lifted very high indeed. "Ungenerous!" she cried, superbly. "Why, poor or rich, should a Voice be denied its opportunity to be heard?"

"That is not original," he remarked, rather daringly. "It's too stilted, from you. Your friends have said that to you, and you repeat it."

"Perhaps," admitted Priscilla.

"I am going to tell you a story," the other began.

"Oh, do, please," begged Priscilla.

"But before I begin I must tell you my name." He drew from his coat pocket a neat Russia leather case surmounted by a modest monogram in silver letters, replaced the case, buttoned his ulster, and, lifting his cap, handed Priscilla his card.

"Mr. John Stornmouth," it read, "Union Club."

"I am a lawyer," asserted Stornmouth.

"Thank you," said Priscilla, indifferently. "Now the story, please. Oh, perhaps you would like to know my name. It is Priscilla Delno. My father is Judge Delno, of the Supreme Court. My mother was born and brought up in Newburg."

"Nice place, Newburg," suggested Stornmouth.

"I think it's a perfect hole," announced Priscilla, conclusively.

Stornmouth's eyes twinkled. "I met your father once," he remarked. "If you write to him, remember me to him. He won a suit for me in regard to my father's estate. It made a vast difference to me. I have every reason to remember your father."

"Dad's a brick," remarked Priscilla, unexpectedly. "He understands me perfectly."

"I should think most 'bricks' would understand you," returned Stornmouth.

"Why?" asked Priscilla, wickedly.

"To continue," said Stornmouth, "with my story. It is about a girl who five years ago, like you, started out to sing in Grand Opera. She was the sweetest little thing, with the bluest eyes and the happiest rosy face; she was poor, though, so she was desirous of singing for a living. Poor child!" He checked himself abruptly, and clinched the hand which was tucked in between the buttons of his ulster. He scowled.

"Don't look so ugly," cried Priscilla, who was watching him narrowly, her radiant speaking face alert with the interest the subject held for her. "What became of her?"

"She's dead," muttered Stornmouth.

"Dead?" she asked, in a shocked voice.

"Heart-broken."

"But why?"

"Why?" echoed Stornmouth. "I'll tell you why. She thought, like you, that all she had to do was to sing; that all she had to struggle against she could win through prayer and pluck; that life was a fair fight, the battle fought with open doors, the result a just reward for merit. She found, child,"—Priscilla's countenance had paled visibly; one little hand had grasped the railing,—he continued less violently, "that she must crush out every natural desire, every evidence of spontaneity, every thought of hope. For the first was misunderstood; and the second was dubbed heart, not art. She would have been more than human to believe she could succeed in spite of facts which were exemplified in the broken, ruined lives of her friends, who were spent upon as dire a rack as saints were wrenched upon in the Inquisition."

"Was anything the matter with her voice?" asked Priscilla.

Stormmouth laughed bitterly. "No. It was as rich as the voice of a thrush, and as full of promise, when she began. When she finished it was heart-broken, strident. It had been torn in two by the conflicting elements of misery and revolt."

"I don't understand," began Priscilla, faintly.

Stormmouth turned and confronted her sternly. "Listen," he urged. "Don't try to understand. Don't try. There is no slaughter of the innocents known to-day so inhuman, so utterly worthy of a counter woman's movement, emancipated or otherwise, as that slaughter of American song-birds abroad who think—God help them!—that the world is not full enough of birds without them."

"I would like to try," said Priscilla, firmly.

Stormmouth eyed her narrowly.

"Try what?" he demanded.

"Try to sing."

"If you sing," he said, "you will forget to laugh. Why not do both, and remain at home?"

Priscilla's eyes filled with tears.

"They would all be so disappointed," she murmured,—*"all my friends."*

Stormmouth laid a firm hand upon her wrist. "You are thinking," he urged, "that others have succeeded. You are thinking that courage is your portion, that immortality is your birthright; that a broader field stretches before you on the boards than off them. Remember what I tell you ten years from now, when your illusions have vanished. Vanity lies at the root of your desire: you will lose woman's best opportunity, wifehood and motherhood, chasing a chimera. You will give your bloom for disappointment, your freshness for unattained opportunity, your youth for mediocre notoriety. Count on your fingers to-day the American girls who have succeeded on the stage of the Grand Opera. Ask them if their life is not a Calvary." He stopped, breathing heavily.

"The girl you speak of," Priscilla questioned, gently, her eyes still moist and her lips quite ashen,—*"who was she?"*

"She was my sister," said Stormmouth.

"Did she sing at the Grand Opera?"

"No," answered Stormmouth, "a thousand times no. She spent money, strength, time, youth, and patience waiting. Then she came home, crept like a tired bird to my heart, and—you know the rest." His voice was husky. He drew one strong hand across his eyes.

"Thank you," said Priscilla, very softly.

"Shall we walk a little more?" she suggested, after a few moments' stroll up and down the deck. "It is nearly luncheon-time. I am cold."

"Not a word of this to any one," said Stormmouth. Then, "You will not renounce your plan?"

Priscilla shook her head. "I mean to succeed," said she.

Stormmouth held out his hand. It was large and firm and warm; it had a grip like iron. "Promise," he said, "that if what I say

proves true, you will recede before it is too late. You will choose obscurity instead of unworthy notoriety?"

"I will promise," answered Priscilla, with a light little pressure of her hand, which, instantly withdrawn, reminded Stornmouth in an odd fashion of a bird which fluttered to its nest only to fly away again, "that if to sing means I must renounce one iota of my high ideals, I will go home. There is no power on earth should induce a woman to accomplish anything whatsoever except in so doing she can cling to her best womanhood." The young face was very pure and beautiful. The girlish eyes were clear and true.

"You are made of good stuff," remarked Stornmouth, sceptically, "but only time will tell."

"You mean——?"

"Nothing. If you were my daughter you should have remained at home."

Priscilla laughed, a little girlish ripple of intense amusement. "Dad believes in me," said she.

"Pshaw!" cried Stornmouth. "Who ever heard of a father understanding his daughter? It takes a mere man to understand a girl."

"But dad's a 'mere man.'"

"No, he isn't," asserted Stornmouth, dryly. "He's judge of the Supreme Court."

## CHAPTER II.

"MADEMOISELLE has the voice of a *rossignol*," announced Purrini.

"At home we always say she sings like a lark," remarked Aunt Mildred. "What is a *rossignol*?"

"I know," said Mary, who was eagerly thumbing an eloquently misused pocket dictionary: "*r-o-s-s-i-g-n-o-l*,—nightingale."

"I never heard a nightingale," said Aunt Mildred, unenthusiastically. "The question is, professor, will she be able to sing in Grand Opera?"

Purrini rubbed his hands together, and lifted his eyebrows quizzically.

"There are two thousand American girls in Europe to-day," he affirmed, with apparent irrelevance, "who are studying for Grand Opera. If mademoiselle succeeds, it will be all the more a triumph, will it not?"

"I always thought I'd like to sing like a Patti, or a Melba," announced Priscilla. "It seems so easy for them to fire off those little roulades, and then dip down like swallows before the foot-lights, and then run off the stage like school-girls who have done nothing whatsoever but amuse themselves."

"H'm-m," murmured Purrini.

"A friend of mine told me that one of the de Reszkés told her," cried Aunt Mildred, shrilly, "that the American voices are the finest in the world. Do you think it is true, professor?"

"I have never been in America," remarked Purrini, evasively. "But it is none the less quite possible."

"How nice these foreigners are!" thought Aunt Mildred; "so suave, if a little non-committal. Their manner is far more elegant than ours. To hit straight between the eyes the way we do at home is so unpleasant."

"Let me see," mused Priscilla, out loud. "There will be the four lessons a week at twenty-five francs a lesson, and the diction lesson at ten francs, and the French lessons at five francs, and ultimately the acting lessons. Is that all, professor?"

"*C'est tout*," Purrini assured her, affably, with unconscious irony.

"How many months do you think it will take for me to perfect myself?"

"That depends upon the intelligence of mademoiselle."

"About a year?" suggested Aunt Mildred, encouragingly.

Purrini frowned suddenly and fiercely. Then he remembered who and what he was, and concealed the frown with a spasmodic grin. "Possibly," he said.

"What is a diction lesson?" questioned Mary.

"The art of learning to sing in French. It is totally different from speaking, you know."

"I don't see why," remarked Aunt Mildred, obstinately.

"*Mon Dieu, qu'elle est bavarde, cette vieille!*" muttered Purrini, as he turned and showed them to the door. "*A Lundi, alors, mademoiselle?*"

"Yes, I will come for my first lesson on Monday," said Priscilla.

"I think," she said later, aloud, as the three walked slowly up the Rue de la Paix, glistening with magnificent equipages, odoriferous of iris from Guerlain's famous perfumery, brilliant with exquisitely dressed women and the frou-frou of fashion and folly,—"*I think it will probably take me about two years to get there.*" She pointed to the Grand Opera façade, from which streamed the French flags. There had been a *fête* the day before, and all Paris had gone holidaying. Priscilla was already imagining, girlishly, the delighted aspect of her rapt audiences, the strange new feeling of power which would be hers with the fulfilment of her hopes, the cablegrams which would speed across the ocean, the celebrity she would become. She saw a familiar pretty face, well known on both continents, flit from a carriage into Doucet's doorway. Somebody in the passing crowd turned and whispered a name. It was an American name which had set both continents agog because of its owner's beauty and vocal aspirations.

"Two years," repeated Aunt Mildred. "So much the better. That will give me time to look around a bit at the galleries, order some stunning gowns to take home with me, and dip lightly into the French language. Would you mind walking home alone with Mary, my dear? I am going in here to Doucet's to see what they are wearing in Paris. I feel like an English frump in these travelling-togs. Ah, there is Mr. Stormmouth, thank fortune. He will escort you and Mary home, I am sure."

"Delighted," said Stormmouth. He was lifting his hat. He was



superbly well groomed. He wore a small bunch of Parma violets in his button-hole. His fine head was surmounted by a tile instead of a travelling-cap.

As Priscilla looked up at his greeting and flushed vividly with pleasure, she wondered why he appeared so different now from what he had seemed on the steamer. He looked older,—to be depended upon. She liked him. Ever since last night, when he had placed them in that queer little yellow omnibus at the St.-Lazare station, she had wondered wistfully when she should see him again.

Aunt Mildred nodded, smiled, waved a gloved hand, and disappeared through two bevelled glass doors presided over by a miniature page in buttons.

"Let's walk up the boulevard," suggested Stornmouth, "and then around to the Rue de Rivoli, to Colombin's, the tea place. Everybody goes there. You will see your worst enemy and your best friend, and fill up your inner woman. Tell me, how are you?" His eyes had met Priscilla's. A glad light had welled up in his, in spite of his thirty-five years' self-government.

"I have been to Purrini's," announced Priscilla. "He says I have the voice of a *rossignol*."

"They all say that," returned Stornmouth. "I wonder if the singing-teacher exists in Paris who does not liken any new voice to the voice of a nightingale. Nightingales are rare enough, in all conscience."

"He said," cried Mary, sticking her inquisitive little head across Priscilla, so that Stornmouth could hear her voice better, "that she would sing in Grand Opera."

"Oh, no, he did not," Priscilla contradicted, peremptorily. "I particularly remember he did *not* say that. He only did not discourage me when I said I wished to sing in Grand Opera. He recognized just possibly,"—this with a palpably malevolent intention, the candid eyes clouded, the sensitive lips pressed tight together,—“he realized happily that when a girl sets out to do anything in this world the most powerful obstacle she has to overcome, to ignore, is the superfluous discouragement of her friends."

"Look at the woman in that carriage," said Stornmouth, with a quizzical gleam in his eyes. "She is a *prima donna*, if you will. She sings at the Eldorado, down on the *boulevard extérieur*. She has diamonds as big as birds' eggs. There is not a man in Paris, from a *cocher* to a crown prince, who does not know every glance of her eyes, every note of her voice, as well as he knows his last year's record at the Grand Prix."

"But she is a horrid, bedizened old thing," cried Priscilla, who had stared ardently, looked away shamefacedly, and was now biting her lips furiously.

"That's fame," he remarked, uncompromisingly. "It nearly always stamps a woman or man that way." Stornmouth was unusually reserved. He possessed an Anglo-Saxon contempt for interference. To-day, in spite of himself, it must be confessed, he appeared singularly devoid of his ordinary tact.

"I should hate to see a man, any man," he continued, a trifle hoarsely, "gazing at your little face through an opera-glass, child. I heard some men last night at the Vaudeville discussing an actress's 'points' after the fashion of a couple of horse-jockeys on a race-course. I couldn't blame them. The woman had set herself up to be gazed at. They gazed."

Priscilla lifted her head very high indeed, and answered not a word. She wore a perfectly fitting suit and a saucy little hat with a red wing in it. She looked like a fearless child: she was.

It was four o'clock. The fountains were plashing brightly in the autumn sunshine as the three strolled down the Rue Royale towards the Place de la Concorde. Glittering equipages with high-stepping steeds and superbly appparelled occupants were rolling up the Champs-Élysées.

They walked around to Colombin's, took a cup of tea, absorbed some lukewarm, soggy, and buttery muffins, in a tiny room gorged with women dressed in the height of fashion, who chattered like magpies over last night's balls, Delna's new rôle at the Opéra Comique, the appearance of prominent personages at the Palais de Glace, which is "awfully bad form after five o'clock, my dear; I should not think Blanche would have done anything so *inconvenante*," heard a mixture of Anglicisms, Americanese, and Gallicisms, and then started for home. Mary regretfully followed. She had longed for hot toast after she had delightedly consumed her muffins; but her companions both seemed absent-minded and in a hurry to get out of doors again. They crossed the Tuileries gardens, the Place de la Concorde, and were walking up the Champs-Élysées, before Priscilla was at all like herself. She had been stiff and unnatural.

"There is a friend of mine here, a singer," she explained defiantly as they passed the Palais de l'Industrie: "her name is Constance Brandford. Her stage name is Brilla. I will trouble you, Mr. Stornmouth, to walk with us as far as the Rue Lincoln. I am going to call on her. We can go home in a cab."

"I know Constance Brilla," said Stornmouth, unexpectedly. "She was a friend of my sister."

"Oh, indeed," from Priscilla, unencouragingly.

"She has been over here seven years," said Stornmouth. "Is it possible the poor thing is pegging away yet?" he added, commiseratingly.

Priscilla turned and confronted him. Her cheeks were stained with a vivid crimson borrowed from her oppressed enthusiasm's revolt; she began with fine sarcasm. "You have perhaps an objection also to Brilla 'treading the boards,' as you call it?"

"Not the least in the world," replied Stornmouth, instantly.

"It is more than probable," continued Priscilla, as if she had not heard him, "that you have taken it upon yourself to make undesirable remarks to her about *her* future every time you have laid your eyes upon her."

"Nothing of the kind," responded Stornmouth, in a tone of surprise. "Why so?"

"It appears to me," cried Priscilla, "that you are one of those persons who interfere with almost everybody."

"Oh, that is your impression, is it?" said Stormmouth. "Well, you are not complimentary."

"I did not intend to pay you compliments," said Priscilla. "I abhor compliments. I merely stated a truth. For a man who is tolerably successful, and who has a number of friends,—you have told me that you were blessed in friends, have you not?—it seems to me that you take more time, and experience a greater delight, in interfering with other people's business than any well-bred person I ever knew."

Priscilla was laboring under the impression that she was very neatly hitting Stormmouth over Constance Brilla's shoulders, and that in so doing she was successfully concealing her own chagrin at Stormmouth's disapproval of the course she wished to pursue. She had reckoned without her host. Stormmouth read men with an intuition which was proverbial. He understood most women with keen sympathy. He had the manliness to acknowledge, in the present instance, that his discretion had deserted him.

"If I have presumed for one instant, Miss Delno," he began, in a dry tone of voice Priscilla had never before heard from him, "I beg your pardon. You are too pretty to go on the stage,—that is all; too pretty, and too sweet. Oh, forgive me,"—Priscilla had drawn up her slight figure a little, and had begun to answer him,—"I am speaking to you exactly as your own brother would speak if he knew what I know and understood the Continent as I do. I will retire from my position of Mentor. We will be comrades. I will suggest nothing. I will only look on."

"Not even that," said Priscilla, in a high, strained voice.

Stormmouth started, and glanced sideways at her. She was very pale, and she had gripped Mary's hand fast. "Not even that, if you please, Mr. Stormmouth. I suppose you think I am very foolish. I know I am a great deal younger than you are,"—this with a little wicked gleam of her eyes, which suddenly roused Stormmouth to the consciousness that she was made of fire and flame, as well as of unusually desirable beauty and sweetness,—"but even so, I dislike being patronized. You have patronized me ever since I met you. I don't care an iota what you know of the Continent. It seems to me your contact with it has made you very—remarkable. It may be clever to be cynical, but to a girl like me it is vastly unpleasant. I think, therefore, that the less we see of one another the better."

"As you like," returned Stormmouth, shortly.

Priscilla could not believe the evidence of her ears.

Constance Brilla lived on the fifth floor of a *pension* in the Rue Lincoln. Priscilla, Stormmouth, and Mary walked the remaining few blocks in frigid silence.

"Come," said Stormmouth,—he was holding out his hand; they had reached the doorway which led into the court,—"come, Miss Priscilla, I am going back to America in a few days. We may never see one another again. We must not part like this, must we?"

"Yes," said Priscilla. She was feebly striving to remember where she had read that the reason women never accomplish anything is on account of the male sex; that they always stand in the way of achievement, just out of the possibility of their superior strength, if not desirability. She weakly felt as though she were putting a big prop away from her; but she had concluded to "live for her art," like Michael Angelo and Raphael. This was a hard tug, to be sure, but Stormmouth might as well recognize first as last the absolute, unfaltering integrity of her high-minded intention.

Stormmouth straightened himself up suddenly. He was very tall, and broad, and fine, Priscilla thought.

"It seems to me," said he, slowly, "I never can quite forget that crossing of ours. It was storm-bound, tempest-tossed. The sun did not shine once, but somehow I never had a pleasanter trip."

Priscilla was silent.

"I am very happy to have met you, Miss Priscilla," continued the manly, ringing voice. "Do you wish me to carry any message to your father?"

"I can write," said Priscilla.

"And sing?" suggested Stormmouth, irrepressibly, with a mischievous twinkle. This was the last straw.

"How dare you?" cried Priscilla: "you are laughing at me."

Stormmouth followed her into the little court for one instant. Mary had run a little way ahead.

"No," he said, "not laughing at you, child; looking at you." A strong firm hand fell on her shoulder and gripped it fast as it swung her round to the light. Another gentle hand lifted her chin softly and raised her lovely speaking face. "Good-by," said Stormmouth's voice. "Good-by."

The court-yard door fell to with a clang.

"They say she's in," said Mary's voice. "Why, Priscilla?"

"The idea," said that perverse maiden, with a singular smile, "of a man taking you at your word!" With this enigmatical remark she dried her curiously moist eyes on a wisp of a pocket-handkerchief, and turned to climb the stairs.

"I think he is a horrid old thing," said Mary.

"You are a snip," remarked Priscilla. "In point of fact, if there is one word I detest in the English language, it is good-by."

"Why do you use it, then?" asked Mary.

---

### CHAPTER III.

THE Constance Brandford whom Priscilla had known five years before had been one of those vivid, bright creatures who had set "all the other girls" by the ears at boarding-school, and had finally gone off in a (school-girl version) blaze of glory in search of a career. Priscilla had never heard how she had succeeded, nor what she had developed into, but she had scoured home newspapers for foreign corre-

spondence concerning her, and finally had come to the conclusion that she was pursuing a modest if none the less enviably perfect experience abroad.

As she and Mary were ushered across an evil-smelling antechamber into a dark and musty *salon* overfurnished with chairs and sofas evidently bought *en occasion*, artificial flowers grown dusty, and a clock under a glass case with the hands pointing five hours out of the way, it occurred to Priscilla that Constance had most certainly mastered the art of self-abnegation with the rest,—the “rest” Stornmouth had spoken of. She had known Constance’s home before she had lost her parents and, with their death, all means of support. It had been on the south side of Long Island, with a beautifully clipped lawn in front, a wide eave-roofed piazza, a Queen Anne interior, and a little white nest of a room “for daughter,” which overlooked a gigantic honeysuckle, a rose-garden planted and tended by Constance’s own hands, and a glimpse of the Great South Bay’s blue waters dancing like live lapis-lazuli between the toss of silver-gray maple leaves at the foot of the garden slope. This was indeed a contrast.

The door opened slowly, and a figure slipped quietly into the room. “Oh, Priscilla!” said a voice.

Priscilla stepped forward quickly and kissed the tired pathetic little face lifted to hers. Then she reseated herself very suddenly, with a queer tight feeling about her heart.

“Why, Constance!” she ejaculated; “how thin you’ve grown!”

“Have I?” said Constance’s familiar voice, indifferently. “Work, I presume.”

“Where are you singing?” demanded Priscilla, nervously. “I must go and hear you.”

“I am looking for an engagement just now,” said Constance, dejectedly. “It’s the most forlorn business in the world.”

“Why don’t you go to Geoffroy and let *him* hear you?” suggested Priscilla, hopefully. “You have such a lovely voice.” Geoffroy was the manager of the Grand Opera.

“It is very evident you have just come over,” remarked Constance, with a faint smile. “Where are you going for the winter? To Rome or Nice?”

“Didn’t you know?” began Priscilla, eagerly: “I am going to sing in Grand Opera.” Then she checked herself suddenly. To her astonishment and chagrin, Constance was looking at her with exactly the same expression of benevolent amusement she had seen on Stornmouth’s face that first day they had made each other’s acquaintance on the steamer.

“Oh!” said Constance. “What for?”

Priscilla blushed. “Because I wish to become a prima donna,” she explained, a little lamely.

“Why?” asked Constance.

“You should know why,” returned Priscilla, reproachfully. “You know what it is to have a voice, and to be consumed with the desire to sing.”

“I know it to my cost,” said Constance, bitterly. “Go to Geoffroy!

I have sung for Geoffroy. I have sung for them all. I have spent all my money, I have used up all my friends, I have exhausted my strength, I have waited, longed, passed sleepless nights, lived through tortured days of imagining, starvation, and total annihilation, and still I am looking for an engagement."

"Is your voice gone?"

"No," said Constance. "There are too many of us; that's all. Besides, there is a prejudice against foreigners over here. They don't want us. It is not the way it is at home. We receive anybody who has merit and a foreign reputation. Here it is different. It takes—oh, Priscilla, it takes so many things I have never suspected; it takes the strength to withstand temptation, jealousy, spite, indifference. Besides, there are only ten stages in Europe to-day, worth singing on, where the directors pay. They don't desire ladies on them, they say. And yet we girls are coming over and coming over, some for a little work, more for vanity, many for that mad search after an unattainable chimera. And yet, when I sing,"—the little figure had risen, the gentle oval face with its pretty uncertain outline and its hopeless eyes took on a color and life which made it look once more the way it used to look,—“and yet, when I sing, everything is forgotten. You don't know what rapture it is to hold five thousand people with a note or a cadenza; to hear the applause which sounds far off like the patter of rain on a tin roof; to feel that wonderful power in you which comes with the sound of your own voice in a great space where the acoustic properties reward it for its best effort. You can't imagine what it is to feel that, after the days and months and years of strife and strain and inappreciation, you are at last in your only normal condition, the condition of song. All art is an uplift; but it seems to me there is no art so captivating as the art which returns to your listening ears the cadences of your own voice. It is a rapturous novel sense which puts out forever the memory of past heartaches, albeit only for the time outlived and conquered."

"Don't, please," said Mary. "If you look like that when you sing, you would make me cry."

"When I sing!" Constance repeated. "But you can't imagine how painful all the practical part of the business is. To go around to the agents like a bale of goods to be appraised at one's market value! It is terrible!"

"I thought the agents came to you," said Priscilla.

"So did I," said Constance; "but they don't. You have to beg them for a hearing. And most of them are men—well, such men, Priscilla! I hate them." This she said with a hot flush, which faded instantly to make way for a sudden gray pallor.

"Why don't you take some one with you?" suggested Priscilla.

"I am too poor. Besides, it would do no good. No one can help you but yourself. We live as we die, alone. We sign our own engagements. There is honor among thieves. It is the rarest thing in the world to find honor among vocal agents. They fleece American girls. They consider them their natural prey. And then they laugh behind their backs for having been gulled."



"Why don't you go home?" inquired Priscilla: then she drew herself up short as she thought of Stornmouth.

Constance shook her head. "I will never return now," she said, "until I am a success. You don't mind my being amused now when you speak of singing in Grand Opera, do you?"

"No," said Priscilla, dubiously. "But American girls *have* sung there."

"When they do," remarked Constance, mournfully, "they are so badly treated they are glad to get away."

Priscilla seemed to see her beautiful dream vanishing like the sun behind a cloud.

"I don't mean to be discouraged," she said.

"You will be the only American girl studying in Paris who thinks who is not," returned Constance, harshly. "Listen. When you have consented to make singing your profession and are studying, you must not go out nights. Dancing dries your voice: it weakens your vocal cords. You must not speak in the open air after singing: it gives you a sore throat. You must not eat nuts or certain vegetables: it makes you hoarse. You must not worry: it tires your voice. You must walk to keep up your strength. You must renounce all your friends in order to have time to work. You must hope against hope, because you must work against people who are ahead of you through their vile talent for the basest intrigues, with less accomplishments, with utter lack of refinement, with nothing holy or reverent in their purpose, with but one idea in their souls,—to be seen. I have sung in Italy for nothing. I have sung in the provinces where my managers made a *fiasco* and we were obliged to close the doors. My enemies say I was the cause. It is not true."

"It is awfully mournful," said Priscilla, with a little shudder; "but you are morbid, are you not? It seems to me if you could be heard by the right agent you would get on."

"That shows your ignorance," Constance affirmed, sadly.

"What are you studying now?" asked Priscilla.

"I am going over old rôles, and waiting. We are all waiting. Every six months about four of us get an engagement, and the other thousand nine hundred and ninety-six twirl their thumbs. Our youth is going; our voices are not getting younger."

"I would rather," suggested Priscilla, "go home and sing for my friends."

"That doesn't pay," returned Constance, coldly.

"Wouldn't you sing in church?"

"My voice has been trained for the stage. It's the difference between wine and water, singing dramatically or singing otherwise."

"It's funny, isn't it," said Mary, dreamily, curiously unaware of the inefficiency of her adjective,— "it's funny, isn't it, that the one thing we wish to do in this world is nearly always the thing we can't do, or find it hardest to do?"

"That is just the reason we wish to do it," said Constance, mournfully, wiping her eyes furtively. "I love the fight, but I can't imagine any one but a poor girl like me doing it unless it is necessary."

"Society is so hollow," said Priscilla. "You don't know how things have changed since you were home, dear. We are all going in for the higher life, such as art, or mental science. Dancing and golfing are not enough."

"Yes," said Constance, dubiously. Then she leaned forward, and took the pretty speaking face between two tender hands.

"Do you know what I would like for you, Priscilla?" she said. "I would like to see you married and settled down. Marriage is a woman's sphere. The rest is for us queer exotics, who are tossed out to battle with the elements through the force of circumstances. I don't believe a woman, if she told the truth, would ever look for any 'higher sphere' than living for others, if she found the right person to live for."

Priscilla frowned. "I suppose it would suit some persons," she said; "but I feel I was born for other things."

"I don't," said Constance, firmly. "There are days when I hunger to be taken care of; when I long for a big brother or any one to protect me, to fight my battles for me; when I thirst for little children's arms. Fame does not bring happiness. Virtue is its own reward, but love is the reward we women want for merit. When we miss it we have missed the great gift."

"But men have loved you?"

"There was a man who loved me once," said Constance, "but that was long ago. I had dreams, like you, Priscilla. I let him go."

"Is he married?"

"I don't know."

"Does he ever write you?"

"I sent him away. He has not the right."

"Doesn't music make up to you?"

"No," answered Constance, with a sad smile. "No: a thousand times no."

Priscilla was silent. She was thinking of that look on Stornmouth's face when he had said, a few short minutes ago, "Not laughing at you, child; only looking at you." What had he meant? Priscilla wished she had asked him.

"I think I shall love to sing," said Priscilla.

"We all do," said Constance, cheerfully, "but we don't get the chance."

Then Priscilla turned to go.

"You had a *début*, had you not?" she asked, as she walked towards the door of the little *salon*.

"Yes."

"Was it a success?"

"Tolerable," said Constance. "I was frightened. I realized it meant my whole future. When one realizes that——" She stopped short, with an eloquent gulp in her throat.

"Oh, do tell us about it," cried Mary.

"Do," urged Priscilla.

"If you wish to hear it," said Constance, simply. "It was at a little town in Italy, where nobody knew me. I sang well, I think:

the papers said so. All the evening I felt as though I were listening to somebody else,—as though I were hearing a voice which was coming to me across a dream I once had when I was a little girl,—a dream of singing before a great crowded house of foreign, unsympathetic faces. The voice seemed very sweet to me, but sad, and not extra powerful. I sang *Marguerite*. When I walked across the stage to the church I could not see. There was a mist before me. I seemed to think, 'If I get through this my cause is won;' but my heart beat so, Priscilla!—my heart beat so!" The sweet, oval face paled with the memory. "After that it was all right; I somehow walked through that awful mist; I seemed to pierce it and come out into a space where all was peace. I imagined what mother would have said if she had lived and had been on that other side: 'My brave little daughter.' I fancied she was there. They said I sang better than I had ever sung before." She stopped.

"There was another time," she began again, with a long, tired sigh,—“a time when I was the *doublure* for a great singer down in Naples. To be a *doublure* is to study the rôle with the hope to sing it in case the real prima donna is ill. Humiliating; but we are all obliged to do it some time or other, and we are often only too glad to seize that chance to be heard. Saponarella was ill. The opera was 'Spartacus,' written by an old Neapolitan who had starved all his life, and who in that one night, at seventy-five years of age, became famous. There was a contralto who hated me, and who had always been jealous of my teacher's belief in my powers. She drugged some water which stood on the shelf in my dressing-room. One of the chorus warned me, and so her purpose was frustrated. It was that which fired me on. I will never forget the drinking-song in the opera, Priscilla. I was a woman who saw her lover being led to the scaffold, and, knowing all was hopeless, elected to cheer his last hours with the memory of her voice. It makes you fierce, a song like that. It holds the possibilities of so much emotion. Imagine, if you can, the situation." Constance's face was inspired with a white light that seemed to come from within. "I will sing it for you."

She stood forth on the little mangy mat in front of her doorway; she had drawn them across a near threshold into a tiny room looking out on a dark, narrow court,—a room which held a piano and a sparsely filled grate of dying coals. With no more ado she began to sing, in a wild, rich voice, the drinking-song of the broken-hearted maiden.

The voice held the echo of great grief and passion. It melted into almost maternal tenderness, like the croon of a mother singing her sick child to sleep, and out again to a soaring ecstasy of exalted endeavor which seemed almost prayer. It ended with a broken chord. The little room seemed to Priscilla to vanish. Only a woman's broken-hearted voice carrying the strains of a mortal anguish filled the dingy, uninspiring place.

"He dies then," explained Constance, quietly. "There is nothing else for me to do but to be silent."

"Oh, Constance," said Priscilla, "I don't wonder you wish to sing,

when you can sing like that." She felt hopelessly insignificant and inexperienced.

"Thank you," said Constance, laughing. "I wish you were a director."

"I never could sing like that," said Priscilla. "I doubt if ever I could feel like that."

"You must have felt to sing of any emotion," said Constance, with a little sad smile.

"Don't you love it?" cried Priscilla.

"I have almost died for it," returned Constance, softly.

Priscilla put her arms around her and gave her a girlish hug.

"You cannot possibly imagine how much I admire you," she said.

"You will come and see me, won't you?"

"If I have time," Constance replied.

As Priscilla walked home to the Avenue Montaigne, where Aunt Mildred had secured an apartment, it occurred to her that perhaps Stormmouth might be right, after all. She told Aunt Mildred of her doubts and fears. "Mr. Stormmouth says," she explained, "it is the hardest life in the world."

"I dare say his remark was not entirely disinterested," returned Aunt Mildred, with a mischievous gleam in her still pretty, laughing eyes.

At which Priscilla sniffed contemptuously, and withdrew.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

GEORGES ADOLPHE FRANÇOIS BARADAT, Comte de Lacaze, was seated in a small room at the left of the main office of that world-renowned and excellently conducted sheet, the *Figaro*. Outside, the walls were hung with photographs of celebrities newly arrived in the gay capital. A bronze bust of Villemessant, the *Figaro's* illustrious founder, stood in a conspicuous corner. Two liveried servants passed to and fro, carrying missives from a patient crowd of advertisers, persons desirous of registering complaints, seekers for place, and divers small boys in buttons, who awaited in the vestibule their turn to see the managing editor.

Inside, the Count de Lacaze cursed the weather, nibbled his highly polished nails, and yawned undisguisedly. For the fiftieth time that morning he realized how much more than usual he was down on his luck.

The Count de Lacaze was fond of saying that, were the Republic an Empire, he would be at the present day, instead of languishing in durance vile as reporter on the *Figaro* at four hundred francs a month, enjoying the hunt with his satellites at Rambouillet, giving châteaux-parties in Touraine, or gambling furtively with a few kindred souls at his private baccarat-table in his own magnificent hôtel in the Faubourg St.-Germain. He found means to circulate pretty generally that he was a great personage wronged. His friends apparently accepted his statement, good-humoredly patting him on the back fraternally when

they met him, and bidding him have courage, only to smile wickedly afterwards at what they denominated "de Lacaze's little delusion." For, whereas the count related vividly the history of his great-grandfather's once superb possessions, which their present heir recounted mournfully to have melted away in the time of the Revolution like snow-flakes before the sun, his listeners were masters of the fact that his ancestor's gold had played a hide-and-seek game with so-called honor on the green baize tables of Monte Carlo and Baden-Baden both before and long after the date he mentioned.

The door opened, and a young man entered, dressed in the height of fashion. An eye-glass was gripped spasmodically within the recalcitrant muscles which surrounded the faded blue of his congested orb. A fancy walking-stick with a heavily carved knob, a pair of immaculate spats which pronounced their wearer a blood of the first water, and a general air of the Paris *gommeux*—half sport, half dandy, wholly a type of the present generation—completed the picture. This scion of a noble house seated himself on the arm of a chair, removed his immaculate tile from his overheated brow, and for several instants silently sucked the inoffensive knob of his cane. His eyes were fixed inquiringly and a trifle humorously upon the frowning countenance of the little room's unhappy occupant.

Then he proceeded to light a cigarette, and, having glided from the arm of his chair down into its luxuriously cushioned leather seat, he remarked, with perhaps superfluous cheerfulness,—

"Well, old man, what are you going to do about it?"

It may not be inconsiderate to explain that the aforesaid nobleman had, in a moment of unguarded sympathy three months before, loaned to his dejected friend the "reporter count," as he was known among his sporting contemporaries, a large sum of that filthy lucre man or woman is considered so insignificant without in the world's eyes, and so disproportionately significant are they so lucky as to be born with its flashing promise in their mints.

The night before, at a world-renowned club,—a club which contained a private room in which fortunes were made and lost, and with greater rapidity than on the New York Stock Exchange,—the little duke, he of the spats and the knobbed cane and the eye-glass, had looked his last upon his lous, and had realized in the night hours—which in French parlance are said to "carry good counsel"—his reporter count friend's absolute inability to make good to him a very serious loss. The duke had therefore concluded to beard the lion in his den. That the lion had the appearance of a shorn lamb that had spent a hideous night on the bald hill-side of despair was to the little duke a matter of the most profound indifference. He proposed to have his money by fair means or foul. Debts of a like nature were "debts of honor," he had only a few moments ago remarked piously to a friend to whom he had confided the entire lamentable occurrence. If de Lacaze had not "the decency to realize his obligations," the duke proposed to remind him that in aristocratic circles such debts were wont to be considered a disgrace did their assumers not appreciate the responsibility their appropriation involved.

"Patience," began the Comte Georges Adolphe Baradat de Lacaze, feebly. "I will pay you when I can look about me and realize where I stand."

The duke laughed cynically.

"No need to look around, *mon vieux*," said he, with a fine smile. "You will find nothing. I can offer but one suggestion. That is, either to blow out your brains or wed an American heiress."

"The first suggestion is concise, and not devoid of your usual bad taste. The second is impossible."

"How impossible?"

De Lacaze shrugged his shoulders. They were narrow, and a trifle bent. Then he raised his meagre eyebrows suggestively.

"I have no acquaintance with American heiresses. If I had, who of them would be desirous of exchanging her millions for my title?"

"But that is what they are doing every day," remarked the duke, rising, and beginning to pace the narrow room energetically. "Look at the past ten years' record. American girls give youth, their birth-right, to marry the man of their heart, their money and their future to secure a title. Why not you as well as —?" He mentioned the names of several well-known French and Italian noblemen who had in this spirited fashion redressed their attenuated fortunes, thus altering their future into an established and roseate surety instead of a dark descent into the ignominy its projectors had done their best to attain.

"Listen," urged the duke. "I have a friend, a dramatic critic on the *Eclair*, a bright specimen of nineteenth-century methods, who has analyzed the present situation and names it simple justice, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, so to speak." The duke was unaware that he was quoting from the Scriptures. He was merely repeating what he considered a clever saying of his friend Desmoulins. "Desmoulins knows to a die every American heiress in Paris," he continued. "He was telling me all their names yesterday at the Cercle,—read them out of a book, *figurez-vous*,—and has sent already to New York to an agency there, Brown's agency I think it is called, where any one can make a calculation of the *dot* the daughter may expect from summing up her papa's possessions. It is as easy as A B C. Come with me. We will see Desmoulins. It is the hour for breakfast. We will meet him at Durand's."

"Done," said Lacaze.

He seized his hat and cane, walked briskly towards the restaurant which faces the classical façade of the Madeleine, and found Desmoulins, a type of the modern *boulevardier*, a man some thirty years of age, with merry laughing eyes, thick lips, and a shifting expression as little to be trusted as it was undefinable.

In a few moments the subject was opened and discussed.

Desmoulins therewith drew out his little book from his pocket and began to turn the leaves, accompanying his act with a running fire of adjectives, side remarks, darts pithy and pertinent towards de Lacaze, and amused glances in the direction of the duke, who was lazily discussing some *hors-d'œuvres* while consulting the wine list.

"H'm," said Desmoulins; "here is just our affair. On the



Avenue Montaigne, No. 53, in a magnificent apartment, dwells a *ravissante Américaine*; arrived one year ago. Complexion blonde, like white lace over pink silk;" this last with a wink at the duke, who, broadly amused, was listening attentively, and a side glance at de Lacaze, who, scowling heavily, had bent his muddy eyes upon the floor.

"The young lady is just of age. Having pursued her studies at home, she comes abroad to accomplish herself in music. She is at present a pupil of Purrini, the great Purrini."

"H'm," interrupted de Lacaze, still scowling; "the most arrant humbug of the age. I knew him when he was starving in Marseilles. His father was a pork-butcher, and his mother was a washer-woman."

Desmoulins smiled delightedly. "Exactly," said he. "That goes to prove that the young woman in question, who is travelling with her aunt and little sister, is no more capable of understanding the true inwardness of life with a capital L than *nous autres Français* can comprehend this little Américaine's mad desertion of her own country, so rife, we are informed, with opportunities for development and money-making, neglecting it for ours, which her countrymen, also gratuitously, inform us to be old-fashioned and out of date."

"Finish with your superfluous remarks," commanded de Lacaze, furiously, "and get to business. What is her father's fortune in figures?"

"As yet, monsieur, I am unable to afford you that information *au juste*. But I am positive I can obtain it in a few days. I have at present a cousin in New York,"—Desmoulins omitted to state that the aforesaid cousin was pursuing the modest calling of lifting trunks in a large caravansary on Lower Fifth Avenue,—“who weekly forwards me a package containing such information. I will be able to give monsieur his facts within ten days. The young woman's father is a justice of the Supreme Court and enjoys a modest fortune. The young woman's mother is immensely wealthy and is notably ambitious. Indeed, it is whispered that she has been said to have stated openly she was desirous her daughter should form an alliance with a noble French house.

"And where is she to be met with, this paragon of beauty, innocence, and wherewithal?" De Lacaze had drawn himself up, and was buttoning his shabby coat over his now well-filled stomach. The wine and food had given substance to his fainting courage. Hope rushed into his veins. He looked as though once more there was a future ahead of him which promised almost forgotten prosperity.

"At the *pension* where I live," whispered Desmoulins, "there is a little girl named Constance Brilla, who is studying for the operatic stage. She told me of her friend quite artlessly. I listened just as artlessly. Then I made my calculations. To-night there is a ball at the *pension*. We are requested each of us to invite our friends. You will come as my friend, and I will present you to Miss Priscilla Delno, the friend of Miss Brilla."

"Done," agreed de Lacaze.

"Softly, softly," murmured Desmoulins, his fine smile suddenly degenerating into a diabolical grin. "The agreement must be drawn up and signed, monsieur."

"What agreement?"

"An agreement that if monsieur succeeds he will pay into my hands the sum of fifty thousand francs."

"And if I fail?"

"There is no such word as fail."

"Would it not be as well, de Lacaze," drawled the duke, who had been a cynical on-looker at this remarkable transaction, and who was now smiling and rubbing his palms together delightedly,—“would it not be as well to insert a clause in that little agreement?—the clause that you refund me also my dues when the transaction is carried out?"

De Lacaze scowled fiercely. Then he lifted himself from the leather seat upon which he had lounged for the past half-hour. In his face lurked no evidence of shame. It was indomitably resolved.

"My friends," he said, ironically, "follow me to my office. We will make a note of this transaction, and in due time your appetites shall be appeased to their complete satisfaction."

---

#### CHAPTER V.

THE Pension Picaud, with its stale, *bouillon*-scented corridors narrow and dark, its musty *salon*, its slippery *parquet* floors and ornaments under glass, its tiny piano rented by the month at ten francs, and its bedrooms whose windows overlooked dingy courts black as Erebus, roofed, among its other boarders, three maiden ladies who were known to their long-suffering if merciless fellow-boarders as "the World, the Flesh, and the Devil."

Six years before, the Misses Bigbee had come to Paris from Bangor, Maine, and had elected to throw in their prejudices with the hard lines of their compatriots who frequent foreign shores for culture and learning and neglect personal adornment, home ordinances, and individual dignity in the process. For, between lights, they lend their tongues to the discussion of unworthy littlenesses concerning their neighbors' affairs, thus exemplifying unconsciously that strange anomaly, so often met with in foreign *pensions*, of the weary physical degeneration rather than amelioration under an unwisely administered treatment of art too strenuously absorbed, plus economy of congenial company too sternly ignored.

Sophronia Bigbee was called the World. She was a busy, perpetually occupied little spinster, who knew to a dot every omnibus-line in Paris, concerning which she never hesitated exhaustively to enlighten newcomers, willing or unwilling. She had also mastered the difficult if insignificant question of when and how to administer fees, what to see, and how to see it. She spent her evenings, after having poured out a record of the day's doings at table, recounting them to the boarders,

who frequented the dingy *salon* in order to economize in light and fire in their own bedrooms, scouring the newspapers for the free exhibitions to be opened to the public the following day, and usually retired early, so as to rise with the lark for the forthcoming campaign.

Miss Catherine Bigbee, whose pseudonyme was "the Flesh," was a superlatively corpulent personage, carrying a gentle dignity in the wag of her good-natured head, which head was surmounted by a front-piece which, its owner fondly believed, so closely resembled nature's hirsute adornment that nobody suspected its counterfeit presentment's undeniable infidelity to any hair in color or texture ever fashioned before or since, happily, on land or sea. Her pale eyes were placid and furtive. Her plump hands were invariably folded over that portion of her anatomy which was presumed to contain her digestive organs. Her tongue was a mild echo of her more active sister's peregrinations,—a course of things which never failed to annoy Miss Sophronia to a very perceptible extent. Miss Sophronia and Miss Catherine, however, were tolerably good friends; whereas the third sister, well named "the Devil," was their proclaimed backbiter and enemy, to the intense amusement of every member of the *pension*, and the Devil's own unmitigated satisfaction.

Miss Penelope Bigbee, in Bangor, Maine, some thirty years before, had been known as "the beautiful Miss Bigbee." Then tall and slender, she was now skinny and spare. Then fine-featured and delicate, she was now the epitome of a knife-blade ancestry as to physiognomy. Her countenance, too, was impregnated with a contemptuous sneer which, in her palmy days, had been designated as carrying the indelible impress of the Bigbee pride. To-day all that remained of that aforesaid pride was a pitiful record of incarnate spitefulness, which never lost an opportunity to flash forth from Miss Penelope's lips at the smallest provocation,—cutting, like a two-edged sword, both ways, as it marched on its triumphant way. She had a large following of persons who had not the courage of their convictions, but who took every auspicious occasion to rejoice openly in a person who had the courage of theirs and her own. They regarded Miss Penelope's utterances as proof of rare strength of character in telling the truth, of undeniable perspicacity in rooting out and exposing fraud; and they laughed shrilly over her so-called witticisms, which, had her followers been wise enough to discern it, were very inadequate attempts at that sort of accomplishment indeed.

Madame Picaud was the widow of a diplomat; at least so she advertised herself in the newspapers, in the columns which were most likely to fall under the eyes of gullible foreigners in search of a French family which combined with the comforts of home the discomforts of a foreign language radically administered in allopathic doses at the hours of breakfast and dinner.

Madame Picaud wisely refrained from mentioning in what her defunct partner had been diplomatic; but nobody ever dared to doubt that Monsieur Picaud had once existed in that capacity, if only from the marvellous talent his widow displayed in her emulative policy. Having made his mark, he had gone out, leaving his widow to lan-

guish under the shadow of his greatness, her sole visible inheritance the aforesaid diplomacy.

The butcher could have told of it, but he did not. The baker might have done so, but, being wise in his generation, he refrained. Once a recalcitrant foreigner, struggling frantically with a strange tongue, was caught gossiping; whereupon Madame Picaud swooped down upon him—this was whispered in the *pension* with bated breath—like a vulture upon carrion, and bore him off to the *juge de paix*, who “forced the wretched creature to pay two hundred francs, my dear, for his impudence, and go without his trunks”—until Madame Picaud had handed them over silently after a pertinent visit from the American vice-consul.

This goes to show that it was pretty generally considered safer to bear with Madame Picaud’s diplomacy. It consisted of meagre fires for mellow prices, bad wine for good money, inferior candles in return for honest gold, meat which was evidently as fresh as paint as well as tougher than sole-leather, and vegetables which had long ago seen their best days.

Perhaps, therefore, the little *pension* was more to be pitied than blamed for having deteriorated into a gossip caldron, instead of a mere innocent lodging for man and beast,—a scandal bureau, instead of a registry office.

Thursday night was ball night. That evening the *pension* rejected its dingy weekday curtains, to replace them with stiffly starched epitomes of the washerwoman’s art; a *frotteur* came in shirt-sleeves and felt slippers to polish the freshly waxed *parquet* floors; one of the boarders played the rôle of the visiting pianist who hammered out a mixture of waltzes and polkas according to orders, in return for innumerable cups of weak tea saturated with feeble rum, and *brioches* made of last week’s butter; and all went merry as a marriage bell—with the gold left out.

Constance Brilla, in a faded ball-dress, with her dazzling neck and arms revealed, her soft hair knotted low in her neck, and her pathetic eyes eagerly watching the door, brightened up as the little party from the Avenue Montaigne made its way into the room.

Priscilla was radiant in a white satin gown embroidered with pompadour flowers, a blue velvet knot in her sunny burnished hair, and a vivid smile flashing forth from her eager eyes and nestling in the dimples about her moist, half-parted lips.

Aunt Mildred was resplendent in black velvet, with a magnificent diamond crescent holding a *jabot* of priceless lace at her full, handsome throat, and a huge bunch of violets which had arrived that afternoon from no less a person than Stornmouth, who, with it, informed her on his card that he was “in town, had run over for a short stay, and was stopping at the Bristol.” “Mr. Stornmouth. How charming!” cried Aunt Mildred. To which perfectly natural exclamation Priscilla, flushing vividly, had vouchsafed no response.

So, leaving a message with her *valet de chambre* that “if Mr. Stornmouth called that evening he would find them at the little *pension* in the rue Lincoln,” Aunt Mildred, without making Priscilla aware of

this peremptory blow at that wilful niece's outspoken intention to "see as little as possible of that disagreeable Mr. Stornmouth," had come away with a subdued smile in her eyes and a puzzled wonder in her soul.

Of late Priscilla had worried her not a little. From a simple little bundle of New York girlhood, charged with sparkling quips and pranks of harmless coquetry, she had suddenly developed into a cool and dignified young woman with the impress of a great resolve in her countenance, and the silence which was said to be golden—a silence which Aunt Mildred denoted as "of lead" as regarded her niece's personal convictions—on her lips. Priscilla wrote long letters to her mother, whose answers Aunt Mildred was not permitted to peruse. She spent hours reading French stories about imperialistic Paris, the doings of royalty, and *château* life, to Aunt Mildred's unmitigated and outspoken despair, "since," as she piteously avowed, she "did not know French, never would, and for all she could tell to the contrary Priscilla might be absorbing fire and brimstone without her knowledge."

"Not many men, are there?" remarked Priscilla, looking around brightly. This was her first ball at a *pension*. She wondered how Constance could bear the contact with all these miserable-looking persons in perceptibly made-over toilets, and look so happy in the process.

"Monsieur Desmoulins is coming," whispered Constance.

Aunt Mildred had been ushered across the room by Madame Picaud, who was obviously aware that it was not often her portion to receive so perceptibly prosperous a personage; in consequence of which poor Miss Mildred was seated next, and presented, without as much as "by your leave," to the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, to those three graces' extreme discomfiture and Madame Picaud's intense satisfaction. For only that afternoon it had been reported to Madame Picaud that they had been laughing over her inability to obtain any boarders except their august selves who "in the slightest degree represented American aristocracy."

"Who is Monsieur Desmoulins?" asked Priscilla, wondering indifferently why a little blond Irishman near her was gazing at her so persistently.

"Monsieur Desmoulins is a very good friend of mine," explained Constance. "He is a journalist. I am obliged to make friends with all the journalists, because if I ever make a *début* here they could do a great deal for me."

Priscilla smiled dreamily. "What a bore all that is!" she remarked. "I never knew one was obliged to make up to a lot of low people like that, to get on. I thought it was just a walk-over, and that foreigners recognized real talent, and were only too delighted to get it."

Constance did not answer her. Her eyes were fixed upon the door. "There they are," she said, breathlessly.

"Who?"

"Monsieur Desmoulins and the Count Baradat de Lacaze."

"Which is the count?" asked Priscilla,—“the big man with the

dark eyes and fine figure and thick red lips, or the little old one with the bent shoulders and the ugly face? Ugh! what a horrid face! It is like a bird of prey."

"His face is not handsome," said Constance, "but Monsieur Desmoulins wrote me this afternoon, in a little note he sent me asking if he might bring him, that his friend de Lacaze 'belongs to one of the oldest families in France, and is a real nobleman.'"

Priscilla drew a long breath.

"Go and seat yourself by your aunt, quick," said Constance, "and I will bring them both over and introduce them."

"Introduce them here."

"Oh, no," objected Constance, in quite a shocked voice. "It would not do at all. In France a girl must always be seated by her chaperon. When a man dances with a girl he returns her to her chaperon just as soon as he has finished."

"What a bore!" said Priscilla. "Fancy any such nonsense in our dear old America;" and then she burst out laughing. The laugh was so fresh and full, it held so rich a suggestion of real fun, and Priscilla looked so bewitchingly pretty giving vent to it, her stately head thrown back a little, showing all her lovely, pearly teeth, her hand raised to adjust a flower which nestled in the coils of her hair, that the Count de Lacaze, who was not far from her, pricked up his ears suddenly and cast a swift, piercing glance in her direction.

"Is that she?" he whispered to Desmoulins. "*Sapristi!* you were right: she is a beauty. Present me."

Desmoulins smiled quietly. "Make it fifty thousand, and I will do it," he said.

There had been a stormy interview that afternoon in the little room at the left of the *Figaro* office. The Count de Lacaze had exhibited a stubbornness his managers had not expected from him in the drawing up of the agreement. He had absolutely declined adding his signature to any paper which would hold him responsible for a larger sum than twenty thousand francs, were the transaction his tempters proposed carried out to his satisfaction. He had totally denied the duke's right to demand his dues until his—de Lacaze's—fish was landed.

Desmoulins had finally appeared to acquiesce that half a loaf was better than none, and had accepted the decree, viciously determining to get the best of this wily adversary did that personage nibble a bigger bait than Desmoulins had bargained for.

"Twenty," scowled de Lacaze, with a ferocious expression. "Present me, or I will present myself."

"Priscilla," said Constance, "allow me to introduce my friend Monsieur Charles Desmoulins, of the *Eclair*, and his friend the Count Baradat de Lacaze."

Priscilla bowed. Aunt Mildred had already gone through the introduction, and withdrawn with flying colors, with the assistance of Constance, from the painful experience of exchanging compliments with a Frenchman who spoke the vilest English imaginable, but who politely pretended to make up for deficiencies by a knowing smile



which his new acquaintance designated afterwards as "perfectly detestable."

"Mademoiselle will dance?" said the count to Priscilla in French.

"With pleasure."

And then that unwise young woman was swept into the vortex of liting figures mercilessly pirouetting in what they fondly imagined to be the measures of the waltz,—instead of which it was a whirl in one spot, with no reversing, which is considered bad form in France. An arm like an iron vice around her yielding waist, and an olive-skinned, horrid little countenance, lighted by strangely congested orbs, which seemed to be devouring her inch by inch, burned out of Priscilla any natural power of enjoyment, and rendered her very miserable instead.

"Oh, stop," cried Priscilla.

"Why, mademoiselle?"

"You go so fast, and it is all so funny; and I am so dizzy."

"That will soon vanish, mademoiselle."

"Let me go," said Priscilla, in a strange, breathless voice. "I wish to stop. Let me go."

The count stopped violently, nearly losing his equilibrium in the process. Puffing stertorously, he leaned up against the back of a sofa and mopped his face.

Priscilla was crimson. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Shall I take mademoiselle to her aunt?"

"If you please."

They found the way back in stern silence through the whirling couples to her seat.

"Mademoiselle is as beautiful as an angel," whispered the count in Priscilla's ear as he seated her. Then, with a bland smile, he withdrew.

"What's the matter?" asked Aunt Mildred.

"Nothing," returned Priscilla, defiantly.

"Yes, there is," said Aunt Mildred: "don't attempt to deny it. You look perfectly furious over something. Did that horrible little man say anything disagreeable?"

"Well, no, not exactly," answered Priscilla, dubiously. She was still trembling a trifle, and her fists were clinched.

"What did he say, child? I insist upon knowing."

"He told me," said Priscilla, her eyes beginning to fill again, "that I was as beautiful as an angel."

Aunt Mildred burst out laughing. "You are a perfect child, Priscilla," she said, when she could speak.

"It was the way he said it," argued Priscilla, indignantly. "If any other man had told me I was as beautiful as—that, I should have been glad, very glad indeed. But the way he said it, and the way he looked when he said it—ugh!"

"How did he look?"

"He reminded me," said Priscilla, with a scornful uplift of her curved childish upper lip which was supremely characteristic,—“he reminded me of a snake I once saw when I went quail-shooting with

dad down on Long Island. He put his head out between the bushes as we passed, and hissed at me. Dad drew his gun and shot his head off on the spot."

Then, quietly, with intense resolve, she murmured these memorable words, which started over the ocean two days later, indited by Aunt Mildred with intense delight, to be read a week afterwards with great gusto by a doting paterfamilias to his wife.

"I wish I had a gun," said Priscilla.

---

#### CHAPTER VI.

"I JUST perceived," whispered, in horror-stricken tones, the World in the ear of the Flesh,—“it was my unfortunate privilege to witness a most reprehensible proceeding.”

“And what was that?” anxiously, from the Flesh.

“I just saw that little Frenchman, who entered ten minutes since with Mr. Desmoulins, squeeze the young lady in the white satin dress embroidered with pompadour flowers.”

“My dear,” remarked the Flesh, resignedly, “have you not been in wicked Paris long enough to recognize that its undeniable demoralization is bound, sooner or later, to communicate itself to all young American upstarts visiting it for the first time?”

“True gentlemen were never guilty of such rudeness in Bangor,” remarked the Devil, mendaciously. She never lost the racy opportunity of reminding her plainer sisters that she once had been a beauty. Then she added, with superfluous veracity coupled with unconscious pathos, “And when they did, they never followed it up.”

Priscilla was arguing hotly with Constance. They had retired into an adjoining room, ostensibly to imbibe some lukewarm syrup which Madame Picaud had loudly asserted would cool their throats after dancing, but in reality to “have it out” with each other.

“I cannot understand,” remarked Priscilla, “how your friend Mr. Desmoulins dared introduce such a horrid little man to you, or to your acquaintances.”

“The Count Baradat de Lacaze is not horrid,” returned Constance. “If he held you too tight, it was because he was afraid you would fall on the slippery floor; that is all. You can’t expect a Frenchman to be exactly like an American, can you? *Autres pays, autres mœurs*. I am sure he intended no rudeness. On the contrary, he admires you immensely. He told me so five minutes since.”

“He took a mighty queer way of evincing his admiration,” replied Priscilla, hotly.

“Nonsense!” said Constance. “If you are going to be such a ridiculous prude, you might just as well renounce any success at the beginning of your career. Count Baradat de Lacaze belongs to one of the oldest families in France. He has the bluest blood in his veins,—so Monsieur Desmoulins told me,—and he is enormously rich. He owns three or four magnificent *châteaux*.”

"It is a pity he does not stop in them," said Priscilla, still unappeased, her cheeks burning hotter and hotter. "I can't conceive why he came here, if he is at liberty to 'frequent the most aristocratic circles,' as I heard Mr. Desmoulins inform you."

"How unreasonable you are, Priscilla! He breakfasted with Mr. Desmoulins to-day, and he brought him here just to fill in a couple of hours."

"I wonder if you have entirely forgotten," said Priscilla, "what a genuine American gentleman is like. A *man*, I mean."

"I am almost afraid that I have," Constance confessed, regretfully.

"They are the cleanest things," said Priscilla, inadequately. "They look so well brushed, and they are so magnificently set up. They nearly always wear fresh violets or a new species of chrysanthemum in their button-holes, and——"

"There's a man in the doorway," interrupted Constance, suddenly, "who looks exactly like one of the perfect creatures you are describing. I wonder who he is. I never saw him before. Why, he is speaking to your aunt."

"There is no possibility of any decent American coming here," cried Priscilla, stormily. "The stifling air would suffocate one of them, in the first place, and these horrid little greasy Frenchmen would irritate them, in the second."

"He is coming this way," said Constance.

"Let him come," cried Priscilla, defiantly. And then she continued, "And the way they dance, Constance,—oh, it is perfectly divine! I would give a year of my life to have just one waltz with an American *man*, in the Newport Casino."

"I can't import the Casino," said a merry, memorable, masculine voice in her ear, "but I am willing to try the dance."

Then Priscilla turned. She looked radiantly delighted and undisguisedly surprised. Girl-like, to her the actual was the absolute. Past and future faded out for her in the supreme and unmitigated joy of the present, like a breath off a mirror.

"Mr. Stormmouth!" She smiled. Then she laughed out loud with pleasure.

"Are you glad to see me?" Her hands were caught fast in two strong, powerful ones. Two piercing eyes were fastened on hers hungrily, and held them.

"Yes," said Priscilla, softly. "Yes, I am."

"Thank God!" returned Stormmouth, succinctly.

Then Priscilla, woman-like, began, to put it inelegantly, to back water.

"It is the most natural thing in the world that I should be glad to see you," she said. "I have not seen a decent American—a home American, I mean—in a year."

Stormmouth smiled pleasantly, with the old, memorable twinkle in his eyes. "There are plenty of them at home," he remarked, irrelevantly. "Will you dance, Miss Priscilla?"

"Yes," said Priscilla.

And then she was borne off into a rapturous land of ideal motion which carried in its well-remembered measures a gladness Priscilla became conscious right then and there that she had forgotten could exist, so full it was of bounding life, and strength, and elasticity. She felt the way a colt feels when he sniffs the morning air after a night spent in his box stall. All her healthy nature hailed the promise that dance contained of wind-swept days wherein sport predominated, and culture sulked, dismally put out for the moment by something essentially more desirable.

"You dance very well," remarked Miss Delno, critically, as they strolled to and fro in the little stuffy corridors.

"Thanks," returned Stormmouth. "I am afraid dancing is not my strong point."

"What is your strong point?"

"Horseback riding, and shooting," he replied.

"How jolly! that's what I love too," said Priscilla. "Do you ever go to Hempstead?"

"Does a horse eat oats?" returned Stormmouth, laughing.

"And where do you shoot?"

"Where it pleases me, my lady. On my friends' preserves on Long Island sometimes. In the Rocky Mountains best. But I catch little wiggling trout sometimes, after a knee-deep wrestle with them, out of the brooks in the Adirondacks, and there is a log cabin of mine on the Restigouche where I lie in wait for salmon and dream dreams in the waiting."

"What do you dream?" Priscilla demanded.

"Of girls," said he, audaciously.

"Many of them?" curiously, and a trifle dubiously.

"Their name is legion."

"No doubt," remarked Priscilla, with a little quiver of her lip. "You have known a lot of them, met them in your travels—and all that?" she added, lamely.

"Yes, all of that."

There was a pregnant pause.

"There comes the Count de Lacaze," Priscilla announced, in a relieved tone. "I suppose I must dance with him, if he asks me."

"Do you mean that miserable little devil with the bilious complexion, who looks like a mildewed portrait of his ancestors, and dances like a kangaroo?"

"He belongs to one of the oldest families in France," returned Priscilla, indignantly, abjectly aware that she was repeating Constance's own words, which had been repeated to Constance by somebody else, but also seizing this auspicious occasion, for some occult reason, to defend her friend's new-found trophy with warmth. "He owns several *châteaux*, and he is a very good fellow, they say, at heart."

"It's a pity," returned Stormmouth, apparently unconvinced, "that his heart is not as conspicuously developed as his face."

"I presume you think that is remarkably witty," from Priscilla, in a high, strained voice.

"Well," said Stornmouth, with becoming modesty, "it may be said to have been to the point, may it not?"

"What is the point?" asked Priscilla, cruelly.

But just here the scion of one of the noblest houses in France bent his much be-ancestored body before her.

"The pleasure of another dance, mademoiselle?" he demanded, in French.

"Certainly," returned Priscilla, defiantly, gloriously triumphant in the consciousness that her accent was perfection, and that Stornmouth could not speak the Gallic tongue.

She rose and strolled away.

"Foreign noblemen be hanged!" muttered Stornmouth under his moustache. "Sets the wind in that quarter, my little lady?"

Then, strangely uneasy, he made his way towards Aunt Mildred. She welcomed him very cordially, talked with him of her brother's family,—which Stornmouth did not hesitate to avow he had "looked up more than once,"—and finally confided to him all her little woes, which were many, and her joys, which she, like most richly endowed and healthy persons, considered few.

Stornmouth listened quietly. His arms were folded, and his head was bent. His eyes, stern and forbidding, were fixed upon two whirling figures at the end of the room, who appeared, to his critical gaze, to be giddily revolving in one spot.

"Mademoiselle," whispered the count, "will it be permitted that your august aunt may extend to me her hospitality in so far that I may renew this acquaintance, so happily begun, with herself and her charming niece?"

"We receive on Friday," Priscilla announced; then, gently, "I will never get along with you if you pay me such deliberate compliments. It makes me feel like a fool. Well-bred people don't do it at home."

"But mademoiselle is in France; and in the highest aristocracy we consider it our privilege to pay them."

Priscilla sighed. "It seems to me," she said, "forced and strained, somehow."

The count kissed her hand as he led her to her seat beside her aunt and bade both ladies *au revoir*.

"He dances like a humming-top, does he not?" suggested Stornmouth, pleasantly, with what Priscilla considered unnecessary flippancy.

"He is not my idea of a humming-top," Priscilla returned, without meeting his laughing eyes.

"You are quite right," retorted Stornmouth, with unmitigated good humor. "I have seen even better-looking humming-tops than that."

"I did not ask you for your opinion, Mr. Stornmouth."

"Any information I can offer you is gratuitous, Miss Delno."

"I think you are unbearable!" Priscilla exclaimed.

"Priscilla!" said Aunt Mildred.

"Perfectly unbearable," the girl reiterated.

Then there was an eloquent pause, in which Priscilla wished she had not come, and Stornmouth wished he had not spoken.

"How is the voice?" asked Stornmouth.

"Superb," answered Aunt Mildred, seeing her refractory niece was biting her lip frantically and endeavoring to control her temper, which had been violently disturbed out of its usual sweetness by some means invisible to Aunt Mildred.

"I am glad of that," said Stornmouth. "I used to wish last winter, when I went back, that I had asked your niece to sing for me, so that I could perceive her improvement when I returned.—Will you sing for me some day, Miss Priscilla?"

"If you wish," answered Priscilla, with reflective, unhappy eyes suddenly meeting his full.

Then she exclaimed suddenly, with a little restless sigh, "Let's go home now, and I will sing for you. It is not very late. There is a big fire in the drawing-room, and—I hate it here."

Bidding Constance good-night, and leaving a message for their hostess, the little party stole away under cover of the starry night, and, hailing a passing cab, returned to the Avenue Montaigne.

Aunt Mildred went off to stir up the maid and institute a quiet little supper. Priscilla stood in the firelight, pulling off her gloves. Then she seated herself at the piano, and, seemingly forgetful of Stornmouth, began to sing.

Her voice was very sweet and fresh, with a rich unusual quality in the medium notes which was sympathetic and hinted of a nature as yet unaware of its strength.

Stornmouth listened silently.

When she had finished she rose and went towards him.

He was standing with his elbow on the mantel-piece, his hand over his eyes, looking from under it at the flames.

"You don't like my voice, do you?" she inquired.

"Yes, I like it," he answered.

"Your sister sang," suggested Priscilla. "Does it make you sad to hear me?"

"Not sad," said Stornmouth, "only it takes me back. I wonder why women always desire the unattainable and seem to experience an acute satisfaction in putting from them the wealth which lies within their grasp."

"Ah, why indeed?" returned Priscilla. And then, as Aunt Mildred entered, she turned swiftly, and ran towards her to pull her to the fire.

"Why were you gone so long, dear?" she cried, ungratefully. "We were bored to death. I sang for Mr. Stornmouth, and he rewarded me by asking the most stupid conundrums."

"Conundrums?" repeated Aunt Mildred, wonderingly, looking up quickly into Stornmouth's strangely pale face.

He returned her glance for glance.

"Yes," he said, concisely, "I asked one, and Miss Priscilla answered another."



## CHAPTER VII.

JUDGE DELNO was popularly designated among his constituents "the ablest legal reactionist in New York." He was sternly reserved and uncompromisingly straightforward in his methods, which were refreshingly devoid of that double-track system of administering so-called justice wont to be characterized by the long-suffering as "shady" and by its propagators as "only business-like."

He delighted in nothing so much as the study of human nature.

Studying human nature from a disinterested point of view is one thing. Remarking its rise and fall from an interested stand-point is another. To-day the distinguished chief justice found himself in an undesirable state of mind, superinduced by the latter contingency. It had been forced upon him by an argument he was holding with a suitor for his little daughter's hand,—a suitor so entirely in earnest, so perceptibly worthy of a good woman's love, so healthily built morally, mentally, and physically, that this past-master of character in search found himself at the start prejudiced,—a state of things he always at a distance contemplated with outspoken contempt, embodying as it undoubtedly must no opportunity for honest and unbiassed judgment, but which at close quarters he found contained a force hitherto unencountered, and hence—this he suddenly acknowledged, to his inward perturbation—almost unmanageable.

Judge Delno never hesitated to express a wholesome aversion towards having "things sprung upon him."

This morning "things" had thus agitated his Honor with a vengeance. He was smarting with irritability at having been taken unawares and rendered cognizant of an entirely unsuspected affair: first, coolly mastered; second, passed under a microscopic investigation; third, submitted to competent and authoritative experience; and, finally, presented for his own digestion with a precision which was above praise.

The judge had always felt an immense respect for Stornmouth: first, because he was a successful man, a man who had overcome obstacles brilliantly, and would overcome more obstacles more brilliantly; and, second, because he had rarely met with so honorable and upright a specimen of the not always impeccable genus known as *homo*. His own act of saving the Stornmouth estates from almost total annihilation had been governed more by his characteristic bull-dog tenacity and desire to get even with an unworthy adversary than by any more high-minded sentiment. When the fee attendant upon his victory had been sent in, he had even been amusedly aware that he was sorry it signified that the fight was over. Although he retired with flying colors from the fray, he had honestly regretted that his adversary had not scented, as he had, the promise of a richer development for the opponent than that opponent had suspected. Ultimately he had wondered if he ever would find a contemporary who would see, as he did, two sides of a case with the same lack of prejudice, and choose the side which promised the least, just for the sake of experiencing the keen sense of exhilaration attendant upon abstracting a good development from a bad ground-plan.

When Stornmouth had thanked him, therefore, he had been happy to perceive that the fellow was worth the cause. He had followed him up somewhat, to see what he would do with the unexpected wealth thrust upon him.

Stornmouth, to his surprise, had met his individual bull-dog tenacity with a tenacity which matched it. He had evinced a reserve which ultimately was discovered to contain evidence of uncommon force. He proved that he pretty generally preceded (no matter how masterful) an adversary's opportunity by outwitting that adversary before the latter had wakened to even an inkling of his power.

This, to Delno, was a revelation. What to him had been a conscientious study appeared to come to Stornmouth as naturally as the flush to a maiden's cheek. What to Delno was an acquisition was to Stornmouth an intuition. He read men like a flash, docketed them off in the pigeon-holes of his memory, and brought them out, when he needed them, with unflagging accuracy, to dispose of them with remarkable perspicacity.

But when Stornmouth confessed himself in love with Priscilla, Judge Delno, man-like, strove to forget personal affection and take what he considered an unbiassed view of the situation. To an on-looker this might not have been considered fully as kind as it was just to Stornmouth. It at least was fair and square as regarded Priscilla. "Stornmouth is too masterful," thought Judge Delno. "He can bully me into saving him his thousands, but if he thinks he is going to bully me into marrying to him my own daughter he is mistaken. He is a fine fellow,—a superlatively fine fellow; but, by Jove, a girl's heart must be considered in these matters." He made the latter statement aloud.

"I am precisely of the same opinion, sir," returned Stornmouth, tersely.

He had returned from Europe the day before, and had run in on his old friend, as he expressed it, "to place the entire lamentable occurrence before him in a nutshell."

"Who asked for your opinion?" demanded the judge, testily. He had been confined to the house for a week with influenza, and was unusually irritable in consequence. Besides, any father experiences a sense of revolt when a hitherto unconsidered personage, no matter how desirable, presents himself as a possible member of his family.

"The case in point is as follows," announced Stornmouth, going straight to the aforesaid point with his customary ability,—an ability which Judge Delno heretofore had never hesitated to laud openly, but which to-day hinted at possibilities in a son-in-law which perhaps might be considered more forcible than agreeable. Stornmouth was pacing the room restlessly. His hands were plunged deep into his trousers pockets. His fine head was thrown forward eagerly, like a thoroughbred scenting the hint of a clover-patch. His keen eyes mastered everything,—the room, the occupant, the warring blizzard outside, the case in point, and his adversary's irritation, which he was observing with that same humorous twinkle in his soul which so often bubbled up and showed itself so pleasantly in his eyes.

"Given," he continued, with emphasis, "a French adventurer with a title, and an American girl possessed of a desire, lamentable or otherwise, to become a duchess or countess, it is obvious that ten chances to one the bargain is consummated to the entire felicity of all parties concerned." He bit his lip vigorously. His eyes, severely contemptuous, met those of Judge Delno with an unflinching resolve in their depths.

The chief justice was seated in a leather-covered arm-chair, before a blazing fire. Perhaps that was the cause of the flush which overspread his countenance at Stormmouth's utterance.

"What do you mean to insinuate?" he stormed.

"I am not 'insinuating,'" replied Stormmouth. "I am stating facts. I have good reason to suppose that you are backing up your daughter in this nefarious business."

"'Nefarious' is a nefarious word, young man. What do you intend to convey by your so-called facts?"

"Will you have the truth?"

"The sooner the better."

"Miss Mildred Delno, your sister, informed me ten days since," returned Stormmouth, slowly, with his eyes fixed steadily upon the features of his opponent, "that Mrs. Delno countenances this marriage, —indeed, encourages it."

"It is false," roared the judge. Then he paled suddenly. All at once it came to him: his wife's recent incomprehensible interest in the French peerage; her poring over French history; her endless letters to her daughter; her mysterious hints, vague as intangible, of coming events which cast their palpable shadows before.

To Judge Delno a foreigner comprised all the esoteric capacities of a nineteenth-century Mephistopheles, with the element of love for love's sake left out. A foreigner meant to his eyes, thoroughly new-world in their outlook, one of those oily specimens of an effete civilization who hang out their signs in Lower Sixth Avenue, therewith endeavoring to fascinate unwary Americans with big-lettered promises of a new hair-dye warranted to be efficacious as well as healthy, and a bloom of youth advertised to contain the innocence of the sucking dove. His true inwardness rose like the crest of a white-capped protest on the tidal wave of a visible and acutely-to-be-contested horror.

He rose and reached towards the electric button.

"Is Mrs. Delno at home?" he demanded of the butler, when he appeared in answer to his call.

"Yes, sir."

"Wait here, my boy."

Stormmouth paced the room restlessly for a few moments. Then he turned towards the door curiously as it fell open, after fifteen minutes' dragging space of time. Judge Delno entered. His lips were sternly compressed, and his features, as usual, impenetrable; but Stormmouth recognized the signs of a stormy interview in the perpendicular lines between his eyes and his curt

"To continue with the business in hand."

He approached Stormmouth slowly. His shaggy eyebrows were bent.

His massive head was a trifle bowed. "It appears to me," he remarked, "that, in spite of ourselves, we will be obliged to look upon you as a saviour, Stornmouth."

"It is only what I owe you, sir."

"Tut, tut! Out with it. Have you declared yourself to my daughter?"

Stornmouth grew a little stern about the lips. "Your daughter knows," he said, "that I love her with all my soul; that from the first moment I set eyes upon her face I had but one desire, as far as she was concerned. That desire was to protect, to shield, and to deserve her. Unhappily, I have not been able to conceal my utter disgust over this lamentable affair. She construes it, quite unjustly, into an evidence of jealousy. You would hardly do me that injustice could you witness the personality of your illustrious would-be son-in-law, with whom she appears so incomprehensibly infatuated."

"Have you told Priscilla that you love her?"

"I have."

"Have you asked her to be your wife?"

"Yes."

"And what was her response?"

"She said she did not know whether she cared for me or not; that at times she thought she did, but at other times she was almost sure she did not; that she was very young; that she would rather sing than marry."

"The average New York woman of to-day," remarked Judge Delno, blandly, "is more or less of an enigma,—principally more. It cannot be denied that the wise woman is she who knows what she wants, and gets it. Singularly enough, however, what woman gets matrimonially she has been known to discover later to be far from what she wanted. To sum it all up, what have you learned?"

"This," returned Stornmouth, without a moment's hesitation. "Were the Count de Lacaze what he pretended to be, I should not interfere. I object now, not from the stand-point of an unappreciated suitor who desires vengeance, but as a man who is desirous that neither you nor any member of your family should be swindled by a mere French adventurer."

"His title,—is it a bogus one?"

"No. The title is *bona fide*, as far as it goes. In France it exemplifies a great name disgraced by its inheritors,—a name used for illicit extortions on the plea of forthcoming remunerations; briefly, a fine estate eaten up by a swarm of unappeased creditors. The de Lacaze honor has been forfeited. The property is confiscated, and any former magnificence is a truth forty years in the past,—a past which appears to be the strongest part of the present count's make-up. Further, I have positive proof that you are to be vilely deceived. There is a man in the hall who will confirm my statements. Have I your permission to ring for him to be sent in?"

"By all means," Judge Delno acquiesced.

In a few seconds a man was ushered across the threshold. He looked like a private watchman in citizen's clothes.

"You are prepared," began Stornmouth, concisely, his strong, handsome hand nervously playing with a paper-cutter which lay on the table beside him, "to confirm all you said to me yesterday?"

"I am, sir." The voice was unexpectedly refined in its enunciation. Its owner's countenance was full of character, but permeated with unusual bitterness. The brow was fine and broad. The features were heavy and morose. His expression was somewhat defiant. He had a shock of auburn hair, and a thick, crisp auburn beard. He was about forty years of age, and seemed like a countryman, in spite of his palpable familiarity with city methods.

"My friend Judge Delno," said Stornmouth, slowly, indicating the judge with the paper-cutter, and speaking clearly, as though desirous of impressing the messenger with the importance of strict honesty in his forthcoming statement, "is deeply interested in the matter concerning which you and I conversed so exhaustively last night."

The messenger from Brown's agency nodded comprehendingly.

"I have here," he began, after a low interchange of words with Stornmouth, "a letter from a man who signs himself Desmoulins of the *Eclair*,—supposed to be a French daily."

Judge Delno nodded silently. Then,

"What is your excuse for turning state's evidence?" The question blazed forth unexpectedly like a streak of lightning which carries the promise of blackest thunder at its back.

The messenger flushed hotly. "If your honor will permit," he said, quietly, his eyes gleaming ominously, "I will not answer that question until we have dismissed the subject under fire."

Judge Delno was guilty of an unpremeditated look of surprise. He welcomed courage in any form whatsoever, even when sometimes it was brought to bear upon him to his own discomfiture.

"Continue."

"I have here instructions from the aforesaid Desmoulins which read as follows." The messenger stepped forward to lay an envelope within Judge Delno's hands.

But the judge checked him peremptorily. "Read it," said he.

The messenger stepped back, drew forth the contents of the envelope, and cleared his throat.

"I came into possession of this paper," he explained, "through an odd circumstance,—fortunately for you, sir," turning to Stornmouth. "A man was run over day before yesterday on Broadway. When we picked him up he was still breathing; but he died an hour after he reached the hospital. He has since been identified as a porter at the Brevoort House. His papers were handed to me by the coroner. I promised to forward his interests in reference to getting word of him back to his friends in France. Two years ago I ran up against this man in Battery Park. He was a greenhorn, just landed; he did not speak a word of English. I put him in the way of getting some work. Singular enough that I should be on hand to witness his death. Among his other papers I found the enclosed, which I took the liberty of confiscating. The business it treated of seemed to be something in my line." Then, turning towards Judge Delno, "The morning

after," he continued, "Mr. Stornmouth called at my office and put some questions to me; but first I will read you the contents of the letter."

"Find," he read, 'the record of the young woman's antecedents, the amount of her parents' capital, and her family's inclination and social status. Is the old man gullible? Is the mamma to be coerced out of her ducats? Will the filthy lucre be forthcoming when the big move is made? De Lacaze is up to his ears in debt. He desires a wife with a big *dot*. If her antecedents are a little off color, so much the better. De Lacaze can then hold the whip hand, and threaten exposure if his demands are not met with. The young woman's name is Priscilla Delno, her address 49 West Fifty-Fifth Street.'—I have had it translated, sir, by a man in our office. The letter is written in French."

"That will do," interrupted Judge Delno. "And your answer to this nefarious plot?"

"Wait a moment," broke in Stornmouth's voice. "I wish you to understand first how I came into the knowledge that this transaction existed. There is a waiter at Durand's restaurant in Paris who flourishes under the *sobriquet* of 'the Rat.' He is like quicksilver in his movements, and is in perpetual demand because of his talent for amassing all the news, social, political, and so forth, in a nutshell, and rehashing it to his clients in an undertone as he administers to their wants. He has the eye of the proverbial hawk, a tongue which is polished like the sharpest razor, and a wit which is famous. I have feed him heavily for a long time, both because I found him unique, and unique amusement cannot be too highly remunerated, and also because it appeared to me he might be rendered valuable ultimately in some unsuspected manner. Whether or no he held a grudge against Desmoulin for a skit as clever as unwise which recently appeared in the columns of the *Eclair* against 'le Rat,' warning all stay-at-home Parisians against him as a spy of the most dangerous calibre, I cannot tell. The fact remains. He set before me, with admirable condensation, the plot which Doxie there"—indicating the messenger—"holds as documentary evidence against the opposition party. He denounced Desmoulin as an adventurer, and de Lacaze as the type of titled libertine who is robbing us of our record of common sense while at the same time filling France's mints at America's expense. I looked up Desmoulin: you know my tendency to battle with fraud whether it concerns me personally or otherwise. I discovered that the Desmoulin of the *Eclair* and the Desmoulin of the Pension Picaud were one and the same, that de Lacaze was the nobleman in question, and that your daughter was the young woman in particular. I took the next steamer for home. I called at Brown's agency. Doxie will tell you the rest."

Doxie raised his eyes. They had been discreetly veiled. They were steel-blue in color, with a fearless light in them that belied the other features of their owner's countenance, whose expression of smug impenetrability had been worn for so long a period that it had become almost second nature.



"The letter found me," he stated, firmly, "just on the eve of a mental and moral crisis. I had made up my mind to quit unearthing family skeletons for pay. Brown's is a necessity. It is Brown's affair, not mine, whether he conducts his business on a basis of honesty or on a basis of fraud. I have done many a scurvy trick since I threw in my lot with him; dirty work for dirtier pay. I could not see the old people starving while dreaming my dreams of carrying on a model farm. This was a contrast with a vengeance. Singularly enough, only yesterday something rose up within me against sinking so low as Brown. I remembered a day when I knew men who took the brain and the brawn out of me in their service only to put it back sounder instead of weaker. I made up my mind to work for men like that, or else go back to my farming. I had rather weed in honest dirt than ferret out human vileness. Planting potatoes is comparative rectitude. Inculcating crime, more, aiding and abetting it by putting into the hands of its perpetrators the faculty to score its innocent victims through means as underhanded as cowardly, is the work of beasts, not of men. I had farmed my mind as well as my body. My father caught and sold bluefish night and day for forty years to earn the money which was to buy me a college education. It occurred to me that I had better farm my morals and let my financial profits go. In short, I bolted. Mr. Stornmouth did the rest, sir. He came to me in a straightforward way, and put questions at me as though he expected me to return him truth for truth. My customers are very rarely of that class. They are pretty generally of the species traitor, sent out from great houses to do their dirty work for them, and forbidden to betray their purpose, their identity, or themselves in the process. With Mr. Stornmouth I suddenly discovered myself answering truth for truth. I was in the anomalous position of leaguering with him towards the total annihilation of Brown and his crew. I liked it."

"Where were you born?" demanded the chief justice.

"On Long Island, sir, at New Suffolk."

"How much does Brown pay you?"

"According to the work I do. The dirtier the work, the bigger the pay."

"H'm," remarked his Honor, grimly. "Anybody would take you for a reporter on a cheap daily."

"It's just about that, sir."

"Anything more?" asked Stornmouth.

Doxie hesitated. A dark purple flush rose slowly and covered his strong, sunburned face. He lifted his right hand for a moment, and drew it awkwardly across his lips. "I remembered," he said, finally, nervously turning his cap about in his fingers, "when I read the name of Miss Priscilla Delno, a girl I knew once, some seven or eight years ago, when I got back from college and went to farming on the old place. Her father's house stood next to ours. We were neighbors. She used to come and lean over the bars of the fence which separated one of our meadows from her father's, and chat with me as I drove my horse to the plough. Then she went off to

school. At that school she wrote me that she met a girl with whom she struck up a great friendship. The name of her friend was Delno. I wondered whether it could be the same. On the strength of that doubt, I desisted."

"What was your sweetheart's name?"

"Constance Brandford."

"Did she sing?" questioned Stornmouth, suddenly and violently.

"Like a bird, sir," said Doxie, a trifle huskily. "There was not a thrush within ten miles could hold his own with her. But she had a taste for the world. She had no use for a simple countryman like me. She went to Europe. I have never seen her since. Her people all died. Their estate was sold at auction."

"By Jove!" cried Stornmouth.

He stepped forward gayly, to Judge Delno's supreme amazement, and laid his powerful hand upon the dejected shoulders of Brown's messenger.

"I say, Doxie," said he, "come into my service, will you?"

"With all my heart, sir. In what capacity?"

"Oh, hang the capacity," laughed Stornmouth. "Companion, if you like. I am off to France to-morrow night. The judge follows me a week later." Judge Delno gasped slightly, strove to speak, and then listened attentively. "I have a mind, Doxie, to show you the world."

"Yes, sir."

"A wild desire, my good friend Doxie, to introduce you to the land of art and song."

"You are too good, sir." Doxie was regarding Stornmouth with a bewildered stare.

"I will present you to a singer, I promise you," continued Stornmouth, "who will put your heart back sounder than when she found it, as you so eloquently say. Take the Long Island boat to-night for New Suffolk. Bid good-by to the old folks. Pack up your togs, and meet me at Pier No. 43, North River, at noon to-morrow."

"I will, sir."

"Now, be off. Oh, I say, stuff that missive from Desmoulins into your gripsack, will you? We may have need of it."

"I will, sir."

"And now," continued Stornmouth, when the door had closed, turning gayly to the judge, who had been a silent witness of the foregoing scene, "and now, my good friend, we will light a couple of cigars while we lay our plans together, eh? The lines have fallen in our way with a vengeance. Shall we pull them together?" He laughed gleefully.

Judge Delno met his triumphant glance with one equally flashing. His lips set firmly in the line which was dreaded by his opposing counsel as exemplifying invulnerable determination.

"Stornmouth," he shouted, "there is not a colleague on the bench who does not fear me when my blood is up."

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN an American girl makes her *début* at the Paris Grand Opera, evincing thereby undeniable proof of the possession of that temerity which is presumed to exemplify the main characteristic of her national make-up, hypercriticism stalks the aisles, congests the *foyer*, and overflows the galleries.

The young innocent is ignorant of the proportions of the arena which she has elected as a vivid background for the display of her wares. On the unwritten page of her vigorous young mind it seems a gratuitous field from which to disport mettle and talent. She does not know, until bitter experience has taught her, that the trial-ground of her young strength and colossal inexperience in foreign ways and methods is already strewn with the record of a mortal carnage as dire as that which once reddened the plain of Waterloo. And if she is warned of it she ignores the warning.

Strife rampant and pregnant hums within its market-place,—a strife of unworthiness coupled with favoritism. A two-headed monster, named Jealousy and Venom, confronts her at the gate of her would-be paradise. If she storms the citadel of place and comes out on the other side intact, her intentions are fortunate if they are not torn in shreds, and her character in tatters, because of vicious innuendo.

It has been said that to the pure all things are pure. Just as thoroughly has it been proved that to the vile all vileness is of the vilest, and what is pure is considered only a grade of vileness all the more reprehensible because it is obviously impossible of comprehension by minds attuned to less harmonious chords.

The victims of an unjust interpretation are many in this world of ours. The seekers for any place whatsoever, in a cruel albeit imperative thrust into prominence, which reads not always pre-eminence, are rich material for that pack of wolves who, devoid of individual creative ability, fall to upon more gifted creators' wares as their personal opportunity. Too often they, in this superfluous re-creation, praise it, to its lamentable discomfiture, in order to enforce the fact of the translator's perspicacity, or condemn it, to accentuate its critics' comparative impeccability. The victim has no redress. If voices, like birds, could be adjudged on their own merits through personal conviction, ear-drums would be considered the ablest critics, and hearts the noblest translators. If singers could sing their glad song up to glory, instead of begging for the chance to be heard or being obliged to sell their tones as so much gold dust to the too often self-constituted expert, there would be less room for the ground-sparrows to twitter of their prejudices. The proof of the singing would be in the song.

But, alas, voices, like genius, go down to posterity too often on the wave of hearsay. An accredited "musical critic"—whosoever that personage may be—is more often than not paid for extirpating the dross from the gold, and believed implicitly by persons too ignorant to think for themselves.

When an American girl unwisely chooses—it is always unwise—to exhibit her voice before the glaring white light of foreign public

opinion, the abuse which assails that sweet organ of almost divine import is like a flash radiance turned upon a vital part,—a part which is not criticised on its own merits, but on the merits of its owner's charms. The voice must undergo a set-to with comparison, which in France is considered inevitable rather than odious. It is compared unmercifully with the voices of the past and the present. Then its owner is stoned, and subjected to the rack, and hacked, and besmudged, and relegated to the cliffs of good riddance, and spitefully misused, and purposely misunderstood, and finally, if in one chance out of a thousand her instrument wins the right to soar indefinitely, an emanation from its owner's heart, a spontaneous outburst of her innermost soul, an utterance of her oversoul, it is as exhaustively discussed as though it were fashioned of fibre and tissue instead of gush and outpour, as though of flesh and blood instead of embodying the nucleus of inspiration. Does that voice win its way to the stars, giving evidence of a sweetness which is supposed to embellish only the main turnpike to Parnassus, the wolves that have failed, or the carrion that has faltered, or the on-lookers who have stolen spurious achievement instead of worked for the legitimate article, or the impotent who have twirled their thumbs while waiting for fame, turn and rend, with the hurtful slur of their weak wrath, the being who through sheer grit and indomitable pluck and colossal self-abnegation has lifted his or her God-given gift in an honest fight for better things.

This is not an exaggeration.

The night Constance Brilla made her *début* at the Paris Grand Opera was one of those bitter nights when the elements war with personal comfort outside, and personal comfort wars with itself within. The galleries were literally gorged with the Paris student world, which congregates about the musical and art arena with deathless fidelity whenever one of its rank and file dares to throw his or her effort for recognition within its midst and claim for it, on the ground of merit, adequate recompense. The American girl students, in last year's coats and hats, their countenances pallid and pinched with want, their eyes and lips sharpened with expectancy, sat huddled together in the topmost gallery, with their opera scores on their knees, their tongues chattering like magpies on the tree of knowledge.

The question was, would the apple of wisdom, of such eminent desirability, of so delightful an import, fall within the hands of their enviable contemporary, or would it smile maliciously, turning its rosiest side towards the breeze of public protest, and refuse to be coerced? Long-haired students, dreamy-eyed and originally clad, as though indifferent to the law of fashion or custom, with stocks about their slim throats, hats retained between the acts, and the odor of last night's tussle with a poverty-stricken Bacchus in their breaths,—Bacchus who was a poor specimen of his richer relative, in that he had substituted absinthe for grape-juice, and nicotine for tobacco,—lollid against the railing of the gallery at the left of the highest tier.

In the boxes were the stockholders and their overdressed or underdressed wives, who, ever on the scent of novelty, hired their places semiannually to infuriate the management, and spent the other six

months grumbling at a government institution which demanded dear pay for cheap ability.

In the parquet were seated the critics, that body, or rather army, of men who exemplify the attenuating aperture through which merit must creep in order to attain a hearing. Their souls were charged with a cynicism as bald as it was bland; but their pens were tipped with the most corrosive acid extant. Some of them, men with families and the record of experience in their lined physiognomies, affably discussed the new-comer's indubitable pluck and imminent *fiasco*. Desmoulins ogled the galleries sceptically, regarded his nails diligently, whispered solecisms in the ear of his companion,—who was no less a personage than de Lacaze,—and awaited with impatience the rising of the curtain upon the event of the hour. There were two *loges* in the house which claimed his attention. One was a narrow one on the fourth tier. It contained all the members of the *pension* in their best bibs and tuckers, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil predominating. The other was a large one on the first tier, in which were seated Priscilla, radiantly lovely in pure white, Aunt Mildred, sparkling with magnificent diamonds, Stormmouth, and Doxie. The two latter had arrived three days before. Their arrival had scattered as dire a consternation in the opposing camp as though these untitled specimens of a new country, universally reproached for its puling infancy, represented a dynamite fuse newly organized and warranted to go off, with or without cause, according to its own sweet will.

Priscilla was pale and unnerved. She had spent the night, a sleepless one obviously, with Constance. She had suffered the same anticipatory stage fright, the terror, the nauseating fear with which Constance was assailed now she clutched at last her life's opportunity. She shudderingly recognized that, now the die was cast, she could not draw back.

"You will succeed," Priscilla said, encouragingly, ignorant of the incongruity displayed in her dark-circled eyes and pallid lips, which were in such violent contrast to her brave words. "I looked at the moon over my right shoulder last night; and I am wearing my little turquoise ring on my left finger instead of my right."

"If it were only that!" Constance shivered. "You cannot imagine. My throat is so dry, and my heart feels as if it were in a different place from usual, and," she concluded mournfully, with the ashen tint of utter exhaustion fastened on her waxen features like a death-mask, "I never know whether I am going to have stage fright or not. When it comes, it clutches me like a demon. I can't cry out; I am dumb. I just bear." Then, very sadly, "It seems to me, Priscilla, that is the whole of life,—just endurance."

"Don't," Priscilla had answered, chokingly, with a little sob. "Please don't."

The eventful day had dragged along heavily, as though holding back its inevitable decree reluctantly, at least so it seemed to Constance's feverish imagination. Even the sunshine seemed to her like a horrible farce of some kind, a demoniacal grin at her superlative fatuity. There was no future for her after to-night unless she succeeded. She found

herself leaving her letters unread or unposted. The days, or weeks, had been numbered up to the night of the *début*, not past it. Every blue-bloused butcher-boy whom she chanced to perceive idly perusing the coming event of her temerity on the yellow posters pasted on the signboards at the right and the left of the Opera, which cast their highly tinted shadow before, seemed to her a possible carping critic, or a scoffing agent of the secret police, sprung out of the multitude, for the sole purpose of encompassing her vocal ruin. She wondered, when she climbed the stairs of the *pension*, after a run around the block to assure herself that her other faculties were not paralyzed like her throat, if in the early morning hours of the ensuing day she would climb them with a heavy heart or a joyous one. When her humid eyes looked upon her little bed, she wondered if the pillow would smother her tears of womanish impotency or welcome her sighs of infinite relief when the ordeal was over and her triumph was complete.

Desmoulins had been with her all the afternoon, accompanied by six journalists of renown, among whom was de Lacaze, fully cognizant of the superlative importance of his organ. They discussed the new singer's "points" in her hearing, as though she were a prize heifer, and argued out loud the undesirability of one of the opposite sex embracing so arduous a career, which they did not hesitate to denominate a *sale métier*.

Constance's sole response had been to smile defiantly, a little burning flush purpling her cheek under the eyes, like the glow of an orb which, supposed to have set, suddenly reveals itself once more, as if to give the lie to its mourners. To her they all appeared like tormentors who experienced intense delight in augmenting her torture, in dragging her fears out before the merciless test of their sceptical analysis.

Geoffroy, the great Opera manager, had visited his new *protégée* and counselled coolness and precision, perfunctorily, taking unsympathetic notice of her waxen face and heavily shadowed brilliant eyes. Then he departed, with a good-natured "Courage, mademoiselle," and an undisguised contempt in the lift of his Gallic shoulders. Geoffroy knew what stage fright was; he knew its crippling power and its clutching insistence. He knew such fright could cut off a voice like a knife laid wantonly against a rose-stem, or hoarsen it into a hideous apology of song, or render it strident, or force it out into an apology of sound which seemed to mock, like an echo of pain, at its owner's mortification. But Geoffroy was wise in his managerial generation. He waited. American pluck was proverbial in the Paris musical world. He had himself signified unusual daring in his choice of a foreign voice, unknown, unsuspected, unjudged except by himself and that inner circle which constitutes the vocal judgment-firmament in Paris. His other prime donne, who were languishing in durance vile, awaiting the opportunity to appear, had not hesitated to scoff at him for his conviction so absolute. He had laughed in their faces. "We wish to fill the house," he confided, later, to one of his satellites. "There is a large foreign colony in Paris. The *débutante's* friends and enemies will come to witness the slaughter of the innocent. If she fails, they will swallow



the pill with miraculous submission: human nature is wont to be extraordinarily submissive where other people's disappointments are concerned. If she succeeds, they will reorganize their doubtful judgments and confess they suspected their countrywoman's undeniable ability after all."

The *corps de ballet* had pestered him with questions as incisive, as rife with Parisian wit and cynicism, as a prize pug would address to his master if he had the faculty of speech.

He had shaken them all off good-humoredly. He "knew a good thing when he saw it," he said. Then he wondered, in a softened mood, why, after all, there was so little good in the world, totally unconscious of the truth that he might have seized his managerial opportunity as an instrument towards music's uplifting import, instead of just the contrary, if he had chosen.

Geoffroy was but a caterer to the public pulse; no more, no less. If that pulse beat sluggishly in the veins of a too pampered audience which palpably required a shock to set its sluggish blood astir, he considered that he did his duty did he administer the requisite shock through his prime donne, his orchestra, or his *corps de ballet*. It would be fully as justifiable, for his purpose of self-advertisement, to register a *fiasco* as a success. It would set the newspapers agog, and establish a nine days' wonder. The sacrifice of a singer or a *coryphée* was but part and parcel of his debt to that government institution, the Paris Opera.

When after the prologue—the opera was Gounod's time-worn if none the less exquisite one of "Romeo and Juliet"—the curtain rose on the ball-scene at the house of the Capulets, Constance descending the staircase with her hand upon her father's arm, there was a pregnant silence. The critics were awaiting a confirmation of their adipose scepticism, or a trial exhibition of mediocrity. They were universally defiant as regarded foreign issues. Paris was overrun, in their opinion, with irreverent foreigners who attacked art superficially, music as a means of financial restitution, and literature as a record of self-advertisement. They had fine-fingered emotions for so long that they attributed their own motives to other persons' acts, and, in the process, hugged to themselves the gratifying consciousness of superlative ability. A little body of paid workers, they told their "truths" with gusto, perceptibly swayed by personal prejudice, after the fashion of an orchestra swayed by the conviction of the man who holds the baton. They were quite unconscious that in this display of personal prejudice they exhibited their own insignificance as critics pure and simple.

It had been agreed that to-night Desmoulin was to set the tune to their antics. He had hinted at big spoils in connection with this *début*, to rush in from some mysterious quarter. They were quite as willing to sign their names to an adequately remunerated appreciation as to an unjust rebuke clothed in graceful metaphor and choice vocabulary.

The little figure stepped towards the foot-lights when her turn came, and sang the *cadenza*. The voice was far-reaching, possessed of unusual richness, and bore the impress of absolute erudition and a musical sense

as rare as it was unexpected. The new prima donna was greeted with a storm of applause, which, started up in the gallery by the *claque*,—those reprehensibly hired appreciators in France,—happily found its way down to the body of the house. It was repeated twofold after the waltz song.

Priscilla, rosily enthusiastic, with one little dimpled arm crushed up against the box-edge, her hands clasped speechlessly before her in intense sympathy, sat with confessedly tear-haunted eyes as the full notes soared forth firmly and saluted her anxious ears. Constance appeared electrified. Vanished was the waxen mask of that morning. It had made way for a crimson bloom like rose-stains on cream. The pathetic face, with its mass of clustering blond curls caught and held carelessly in their gold traditional fillet studded with pearls, stood out like a cameo from the background of Venetian tapestry and wax lights. Her gestures were natural, unstudied,—although Priscilla knew how many years it had required to assume their present proportion. The diction, that most difficult accomplishment for American girls,—an accomplishment seldom taken into consideration by the unenlightened, but which is none the less the rock upon which most Anglo-Saxon would-be vocalists split in France, to go down with all on board,—the diction was openly discussed as “remarkable.”

Stornmouth's eyes had been fixed upon Doxie, who, attired in one of his employer's dress-suits, which set off his broad figure to great advantage, had restlessly mopped his sunburnt brows while awaiting the rise of the curtain. He was conspicuously impatient as regarded the lack of ventilation and the development of Stornmouth's seemingly humorous plan to “introduce him to a new singer.” But the big, honest fellow had trembled undisguisedly as Constance walked towards the foot-lights, had given vent to a guttural exclamation when she began to sing, and then had broken forth hoarsely, to Aunt Mildred's visible consternation, with, “Grit, pure grit! Who would have ever imagined the little woman had it in her?”

Afterwards a great silence had fallen upon him; but it was a golden silence, fraught with memories. There had come to Doxie, as there comes into most lives at the time of a supreme crisis, an atmospherical association which had been with him when he had experienced his greatest heart-swell. It was the faint whiff of new hay, the echo of a threshing sound, the odor of salt and sedge. His mind had travelled back, there in that crowded auditorium packed with the titled and the illustrious of the Eastern continent, to a clover-patched meadow, bound in with scrub-oaks, which, like a frieze of spice about fulfilled promise of summer, exuded a familiar happiness redolent of hope, and youth, and peace.

“Hush,” Stornmouth whispered succinctly, with a quick comprehension,—a revelation to Doxie in its masterful tenderness and its subsequent action. “Hush. We will see her after the opera.” Then, very low, “Brace up. Rome was not won in a day,” with which enigmatical suggestion Stornmouth won his new friend's perpetual allegiance by turning his back abruptly upon his ungovernable emotion.

In return for that plethoric promise, Stornmouth's concealed hand, which hung over the back of Priscilla's chair, experienced a grip, a moment later, which was essentially farm-yard in its unbridled eloquence.

Doxie's blue eyes glanced across his, the way a sword glances across steel, leaving the flash of more to come behind it.

That glance, to Stornmouth, weary with the past month's smothered pain and quicksilver evolutions, seemed like a knock at the chained portal of his own despair, which he had fiercely striven to shut out in order to make way for his customary phlegmatic philosophy—in vain. It gaped hideously at him now, as when he was alone. It reminded him that he was living on the brink of a mental precipice wherefrom he dared not even contemplate the gulf below. He sighed shortly, and turned towards Priscilla.

"Will you take me into the *foyer*?" that unwise and daring young woman asked. "I wish to speak to the count and Monsieur Desmoulins." The curtain had fallen on the second act.

#### CHAPTER IX.

DESMOULINS stood against a marble pillar, chatting with a knot of cronies. De Lacaze, his dyed moustache bitten nervously between his yellow teeth, gazed piercingly about him in search of Priscilla. She came, finally, down the corridor, crowded with that portion of the audience which, Paris fashion, deserts the *loges* between the acts, to imbibe fresh air while exchanging stale platitudes. She was on Stornmouth's arm. She looked like a white rose in the midst of a hot-house of forced flowers, sun-kissed, instead of gaslit, into fairness. Her eager young face, fine and spirited, bore the hint of a womanly self-reliance which was like a whiff of something delightfully uncommon to de Lacaze's jaded epicureanism.

Desmoulins held forth, oracle-wise, to a man on his right, who was dubbed ironically by his *confrères* the "patented moralist of France." Cavally had convictions, and held to them. In this instance he had barefacedly opposed Desmoulins' criticism, and declared that the *débütante* had won, "hands down."

"She will have a big fight, that young one," he asserted, with a world-wise wag of his head. "She has voice, talent, beauty, and intelligence. Her comrades will damn her future, if she does not frustrate their diabolical intrigues with consummate tact. She is too near perfection to attain popularity except among the just; and the just are in the minority here," he added under his breath, with a refractory lift of his brows.

"Absurd!" ejaculated Desmoulins. "Notoriety is not attained so easily this side of the water. They come, these young novices, and dare to try and take us old dogs by storm. She is neither a skirt-dancer nor a rope-walker,—more's the pity. She poses as an artist. She has much to learn. The third and fourth acts will determine her

fate. If I am not mistaken, she lacks sustaining power and temperament."

Temperament, in foreign translation, is that element which a pure American woman is brought up to ignore, and which histrionically inclined Frenchwomen are exhaustively counselled to cultivate. It is what the sun is to the sky, what the heat is to summer, what the blue is to the sea. It is the body of any achievement. It ranks its owner as a woman who has "lived" materially. Without this hint of temperament, which obviously is portrayed in greater perfection if emulated from the stand-point of personal experience than through any copy, no matter how arduous its reality, an actress is contemptuously alluded to as an "ignoramus," and laughed at for being a weak interpreter instead of exemplifying the epitome of vital delineation. Playing at love, as in Constance's case, rings false on French ears. The critics forgot that Juliet was fourteen, her materialism therefore in its baldest infancy. They remembered only a once great artist, long since dead, who sang the rôle to their complete satisfaction because she sang it from a stand-point of many-sided temperament, an obvious outgrowth of her own erotic experience.

The critics called Constance "icy," therefore, and "characterless," and yawned out a protest at her evident "unfamiliarity with the boards," totally indifferent as to whether this were her first appearance upon the French stage or not. Had they been asked to consider her tenderly, they would have answered that the *débutante* had not considered them in her exhibition of imperfection. Yes, the voice was good,—small, but sweet,—but the girl lacked experience: one could see that she was "raw and colorless." This, after repeated nudges from Desmoulins, and frowns, fierce and undeniably contradictory, from de Lacaze.

De Lacaze, out of the depths of his own talent for using his friends to make the biggest moves on the world's chess-board, so that he might retire unsuspected of collusion from behind a possibly brought-to-light intrigue, had discerned, with acute apprehension, the policy Desmoulins proposed to pursue. It was to be a case of blackmail. De Lacaze knew blackmailing methods root and branch. He had pursued them for years, with recognized proficiency. Desmoulins was to constitute himself the go-between, in journalistic influence, which would determine Constance's future, by substituting a flank movement where Constance's friends were concerned. In this manner he proposed to trip up his adversary if he were caught endeavoring to make off with the whole of the spoils, and demand remuneration of his victim for having governed the verdict. He was holding back the tide now, the tide which had turned in favor of the new *débutante*, whose lucky star had set fair, did Desmoulins not turn it in its course.

He seemed an important personage enough, with his broad shoulders, which stood full two inches above most of the men who surrounded him. It was evident Desmoulins could control by sheer cupidity what mere integrity would have no power to accomplish. He made such flashing promises, he exuded good humor and prosperity and the

odor of fine wine and the best cigars. His was the success of one of the few who succeed. Nothing is more intoxicating to the unwary and timid. Desmoulins was a born leader. De Lacaze felt suddenly stung into unwilling acknowledgment of his manager's proficiency, as though a poisonous gnat were buzzing in his ears and confusing his heretofore considered cool judgment.

He approached Priscilla. She was chatting brightly with her aunt and Stornmouth. As the count neared her she colored perceptibly and stepped forward lightly.

"You are late," she said, reproachfully. "Why did you not come to our *loge*, as I asked you?"

"Mademoiselle was occupied," returned the count, discreetly, with a low bow to Aunt Mildred, and a lower one to Stornmouth, who returned it frigidly. "Mademoiselle has the air of a young queen. And what a success that of Mademoiselle Brilla! But a few hours, and she will be famous. Ah, you Americans, you beautiful Americans, with your wonderful talents and great courage! you rule the world."

Priscilla had taken his arm, and was strolling with him a little ahead of the others.

"I have not spoken with Monsieur Desmoulins," she said, interrupting the count's flow of compliments serenely: she had grown accustomed to them in the past few months, and they no longer annoyed her as they used to. "I would like to speak with him. Perhaps I could influence him in regard to Constance. He is very powerful, is he not? He can decide Constance's fate, can't he?"

De Lacaze nodded his head without responding. "And mine," he thought, dismally.

"Will you tell him I wish to speak with him?" continued Priscilla.

"Come with me," said her companion. "*Mon ami* will be flattered if you consult him before his friends."

As they approached, the little circle fell back and fixed its gaze upon Priscilla. She walked up to Desmoulins and gave him her hand. "Good-evening, monsieur," she said, in her fresh, ringing voice. "I have come to ask you and your friends to say a good word for Mademoiselle Brilla."

"Your word is a command, mademoiselle."

"Her success is assured, is it not?"

"That," replied Desmoulins, with a subtle smile out of one corner of his handsome eyes, "can never be foretold. It depends."

"Upon what?"

"Mademoiselle," began Desmoulins, with a cynical smile about his lips, "we can all succeed if we pay the price."

"I do not understand you," said Priscilla.

"Mademoiselle is too clever to misunderstand me. Miss Brilla is poor. If Miss Brilla controlled a purse of gold, Miss Brilla might add to her chances—mind you, I say only 'chances'—of success, did she disburse that gold."

"Do you mean to insinuate," cried Priscilla, drawing up her slight

young figure indignantly, "that criticism is a matter of dollars and cents?"

"That is putting it roughly." Desmoulins smiled, with a swiftly dissimulated scowl, speaking almost under his breath. "Turn the phrase more pleasantly, if I may be so bold as to ask it. Your nation has a straightforward way of speaking which is a trifle . . . confusing. Can you steal pictures, mademoiselle? Can you steal law? Can you steal medicine? Why, then, should you steal criticism?"

Priscilla hesitated an instant. Then she asserted, firmly, "There is such a thing as principle, monsieur."

Desmoulins made a wry face and raised his handsome brows.

"There is such a thing as conviction. I have read of men who starved on a crust rather than renounce one tittle of what they believed."

"Critics are not of that order, mademoiselle."

"When they are not, what they say should be considered of no value," returned Priscilla, hotly.

"Softly, softly, mademoiselle. What they say is of vast importance. The way they say it is of no account. Miss Brilla has won her instruction. Why has it never occurred to her to win her possible detractors?"

"But say she has no money?"

"That is her misfortune, not ours. I have no doubt we might, in time, instruct your friend in the methods to pursue as regards the career concerning which she is so obviously ignorant. She could entertain her friends at supper. She could offer them from time to time a seat at her performances. She could recommend them as superlatively capable in their profession. She could do much which—I speak disinterestedly; what I say for Miss Brilla is an evidence of true friendship—which I have no time to explain here."

"Thank you," said Priscilla, artlessly. "I thank you, Monsieur Desmoulins. I felt you were honest." Her little fingers slid into Desmoulins' astonished grasp.

Desmoulins inclined himself a trifle fantastically. Then, with a perceptible increase of color in his enigmatical countenance, he remarked, "I have just been saying to my *confrères*," denoting those gentlemen with a wave of his hand,—they had been intent listeners to the above farce, and some of them were still smiling broadly, albeit deprecatingly,—"I have just been saying that the next two acts will determine Miss Brilla's fate. Sustained power is what is most requisite in a singer; I fancy your friend is devoid of that."

"On the contrary," cried Priscilla, tapping her foot on the tessellated floor impatiently, "she has more sustained power than any woman I ever knew."

"My niece," interrupted Aunt Mildred's quiet voice, in English, "is a warm advocate of her comrades, Monsieur Desmoulins. It is our New-World custom to fight our friends' battles."

"Admirable!" returned Desmoulins, in the same language. He was noted for his bilingual capacity. He inflated his chest, and smiled with gratified pride at being surrounded by so well-dressed a party:



for the past few moments the little knot had been the observed of all observers who passed to and fro. "Admirable! Your country is indeed a wonderful one, madame."

Aunt Mildred shrugged her shoulders, and turned to Stornmouth. "As if it needed that oily specimen of the Latin race to confirm it," she whispered, very low.

Stornmouth did not reply. He was biding his time. There was a gigantic protest surging like burning lava through his veins. It took all his strength to choke it down.

"Aunt Mildred," whispered Priscilla, "I wish you to invite all these gentlemen"—with a little sweep of her arm which included the count, Desmoulins, and six or eight journalists—"home to supper."

There was a sudden ungovernable movement on Stornmouth's part, which vanished as soon as it made itself evident. He folded his arms stolidly, and appeared to be watching a woman with dyed hair and a magnificent tiara who stood on the first landing of the great marble staircase.

"Because," Priscilla whispered, "it is the thing to do for Constance. It will put them all in good humor, and they will say nice things of her in the newspapers."

"You don't say so!" cried Aunt Mildred. "Well, I never! Now how in the name of heaven, Priscilla, did you find that out?"

"Somebody told me," whispered Priscilla, mysteriously. Then, with a rosy warm arm thrown suddenly about Aunt Mildred's neck, "Come, *do*, like a dear; for my sake. Will you?"

"What do you think of it, Mr. Stornmouth?" Aunt Mildred questioned, cautiously.

"Miss Priscilla," answered Stornmouth, with his staring eyes indifferently fixed upon the ceiling, considering the far-famed frescos which had made their illustrious lodging there, "Miss Priscilla evidently knows what she is talking about." With this tactful evasion of the main issue he brought his gaze down from the ceiling and directed it, strained and pertinent, at *de Lacaze*.

That gentleman was smiling a trifle ironically at the turn affairs had taken. He was inwardly convulsed at Desmoulins' audacity. He considered his manager was to be wined and suppered at his—the count's—expense. He was conscious more than ever that he was in the toils of a master spirit. His little romance was working out into a gorgeous work of art indeed, under the hands of a professional adventurer.

"I will leave you with Mr. Doxie for ten minutes, then," said Aunt Mildred, with her usual bustling air when any entertainment of her own instigation was under way, "while I indite a telegram to send home. Gentlemen," she added, turning to Desmoulins and his party, "it will give me great pleasure if you will sup with us after the Opera at 53 Avenue Montaigne, to meet Miss Brilla."

Desmoulins interpreted her remark in French to his comrades, who bowed low in response and signified in the same language their satisfaction at being thus honored.

"Might I suggest," remarked Desmoulins, coolly, "that madame

invite my friend the Duc de la Tour d'Auvergne also? He is a great power, and a charming man."

The count gasped.

"By all means," returned Aunt Mildred, cheerily.

The count mopped his brow.

"That will make—let me see," counted Aunt Mildred, "one, two, twenty of us, counting Miss Brilla and the duke."

"Precisely."

"Thank you, Monsieur Desmoulins."

"It is for me to thank madame," Desmoulins smiled, with a grave inclination.

"*Farceur*," muttered the count under his breath, explosively.

Desmoulins gave him a warning, if triumphant, glance. The count smothered his indignation as best he could.

"Come and tell me," urged Priscilla to Doxie, "what made it occur to Mr. Stormmouth to cross with you? He has told me so much of many of his friends. He never mentioned your name."

Doxie blushed awkwardly. "It is a long story, Miss Delno," he said, "and I haven't the gift of speech. All I know is that Mr. Stormmouth is a man in a thousand,—one of nature's noblemen. If he ever desires a return in any degree in compound interest for his disinterestedness, he has only to call upon Stephen Doxie."

"I don't consider him 'perfect' by any means," remarked Priscilla, mutinously. They had strolled into the *foyer*, and were seated on a velvet bench under a huge mirror, watching the crowd. "It is singular to me that I never meet any one who does not go off into ecstasies over Mr. Stormmouth's perfections. Aunt Mildred, for instance——" She checked herself suddenly, and bit her lip.

Doxie did not answer. He had mastered Stormmouth's secret from a look he had seen in his face. He regretted that Miss Delno appeared so indifferent to it.

"Were you ever in love?" asked Priscilla, suddenly, apropos of nothing whatsoever, as far as Doxie could perceive.

"Once," he answered.

"Did you love her very much?"

"Better than life."

"How did you feel?" Priscilla demanded. Then, as Doxie hesitated, visibly disconcerted at her inquisitiveness, she leaned forward, and pressed her little gloved hand lightly on his. "The reason I wish to know is," she explained, lucidly, "because I wish to know. That is all."

"That is a very good reason. But why do you wish to know?" Doxie was quite unconscious of having administered a counter-thrust, until he all at once was vividly made aware of it through the sudden brilliant carmine which overspread Priscilla's cheeks.

"That's telling," said she, lifting her hand, and pretending to arrange a soft tendril of hair which had fallen along her cheek like an itinerant moon-ray across pink velvet.

"You don't feel," explained Doxie, hoarsely, after a few moments' pregnant pause; "you know."

"How do you know?"

"It fills you up," said he.

"Are you happy?"

"Happy—and miserable."

"Are you glad?"

"You can't tell."

"Does your heart beat?"

"What nonsense!" laughed Doxie. "One's heart always beats."

"I have had times in my life," Priscilla confessed, with a far-away gaze in her translucent eyes, "I have had days when at the coming of one person—perhaps the person I love—my heart has beat so I could scarcely breathe. My hands have grown cold,—so cold,—and my throat so dry. And when he came I could say nothing. And when he went I have spent whole nights thinking over what I might have said, and didn't."

"That's it," cried Doxie.

"What?"

"Love," explained Doxie, briefly.

"But do you call that happiness?" asked Priscilla, indignantly.

"I think it is so unpleasant."

"It is unpleasant if the one you love does not love you. Not otherwise."

Priscilla flushed even more vividly. Then she glanced about her hurriedly, and seemed to dismiss this entrancing subject with a supreme effort of the will.

"I want you to know," she said, "my friend Constance Brilla. I think she is just the sort of woman a man like you would love. She is so brave and so quiet, the little thing. She is just my opposite. She does not fly into passions over nothing. She does not dream of great things and fail at them. She sets her teeth, and arrives."

"Have you failed at anything?"

Priscilla's eyes filled with tears. She bit her lip.

"Yes," she confessed, reluctantly. "I have failed at two things since I have been over here; but I do not propose to tell you as yet what they are. You will probably see for yourself some day."

"We all fail some time or other," said Doxie, comfortingly. "Often what we consider a failure turns into a blessing in disguise."

"Yes? But I like blessings that are not disguised," she answered, dolefully. Then, "There goes the bell for the third act. Let us go back to the *loge*. There are Aunt Mildred and Mr. Stornmouth.—What did you order?" she shouted, as they came within hailing distance. "Oysters?"

"No," returned Aunt Mildred: "lobster salad, cold partridge, and champagne."

"Did you hear that?" whispered Desmoulins in de Lacaze's ear. "She is going to kill the fatted calf." He laughed.

"The fatted calf," repeated de Lacaze fiercely to himself: "the scented fox, you mean. *Saperlotte!* Desmoulins, *mon vieux*, you have shown your fangs too soon."

## CHAPTER X.

THE curtain had fallen upon the last act. The applause had been riotous and unstinted,—not of the *claque* species; genuine. Stornmouth conducted Doxie behind the scenes and presented him to Constance, who, radiantly happy, beaming with girlish relief, her eyes moist with grateful tears, was surrounded by a crowd of stockholders,—men with waxed moustaches and eyes like the congested orbs of vultures. As her gaze fell upon Stornmouth she stepped forward with both hands outstretched. He grasped them warmly. “I have seen to-night,” he began, a trifle awkwardly, after he had offered his warmest congratulations, “an old friend of yours who begs a reintroduction.”

Constance smiled. “I cannot imagine whom you mean,” she said, carelessly. She stopped short as her glance fell upon Doxie.

There was a sweet volatile flush which dyed her cheeks an instant; then both little hands outstretched again.

“You—in Paris?” she ejaculated. Stornmouth could hear her heart beat through the words, but Doxie took her ease of manner as a sign of indifference. Lover-like, he attached the wrong value to outward appearances.

“I came,” he answered, quietly, “with Mr. Stornmouth. He brought me here to-night.” He stopped. His hands were grasping those other dear, longed-for ones so fast. He had wholly forgotten that they two were not alone.

But she, woman-like, mindful of curious gazers, withdrew hers with a slight frown which was essentially bewitching, since it belied the act regretfully, and said to Stornmouth, “When shall I see you again?”

Stornmouth’s eyes twinkled.

“We are all going around to supper now,” he remarked, looking everywhere except at the two somewhat agitated faces before him, which, quite futilely, were so bravely endeavoring to conceal any evidence of emotion, “at Miss Delno’s: you, to meet those ‘arrows of outrageous fortune,’ the critics,—according to Miss Priscilla’s idea they must be fed and winned in order to award you your just merits; ourselves, to look on at your triumph, and applaud grit and pluck after the same honest fashion in which we have been applauding them all the evening.—Doxie, will you escort Miss Brandford? I must return and fetch the ladies.”

Before Doxie could answer, Stornmouth had vanished.

“Come,” said Doxie, in a strange, smothered sort of voice. The light and the heat dazzled him. The figures of the *coryphæes* hurrying to and fro past and behind them, in and out of the wings, seemed like so many noisome insects let loose to upset his newly found peace. Was it peace, this hammering, thudding anguish of impatience in his veins?

“I must fetch my wraps and change my dress,” said Constance, faintly. “Wait for me, will you?”

“I have waited,” returned Doxie, pertinently. Then, considering that he had made an impression which could not be misunderstood, he seated himself quietly, while Constance went off to change her splendid bridal attire for a little brown homespun which looked, to Doxie, like

something his mother used to wear when he, a lad, ran to her weeping for comfort. In reality the frock in question was the girl's best, a marvellous creation by a little Parisian dress-maker who had worked on it reverently, dreaming of its being worn by a great prima donna of the Opera. But Doxie was a man and a lover.

When they arrived at the Avenue Montaigne, Constance was seized by Aunt Mildred, rapturously embraced, and placed in the seat of honor at the table, surrounded by all the best-known newspaper men of Paris, eager to exchange a word with the coming spoiled child of the public. Constance was strangely, dreamily content. Her nerves were steadied by that hand-clasp of Doxie's. Quite simply, he had held her hand in his while they had driven from the Opera to Miss Delno's, and she had poured out to him a running river of her relief, her past struggles, her life. She had not yet had time to think out the sweet promise of his coming, the sternly controlled look in his glad face, the sense of help and protection the mere fact of his presence brought her. She put it all on one side with an effort, as something delightful to be dreamed about with the rest of her triumph of that evening.

Stormmouth, one of the most sought-for of after-dinner speakers, a man of the world in the best sense, a diplomat of no mean merit, astonished Priscilla with his French, which all at once, to her surprise, he turned on, with a mischievous look in his eyes, for her special benefit. Up to now she had not attributed to him any linguistic ability whatsoever. He was the main prop to-night, the most inspiring element of the feast. He kept the current of wit and innuendo and repartee flowing in an uninterrupted stream in both French and English. So delightfully did he insert the wedge of his tact into the groove of her inexperience that she radiated therefrom with brilliant sallies also, a reflection of Stormmouth's undeniable perspicacity.

De Lacaze frowned and bit his nails from time to time. This brilliant American, with his air of undaunted self-respect,—the impress of success was on Stormmouth's entire personality,—crippled his own resources, which were remarkable, if somewhat less subtle. He had heretofore possessed a reputation for keeping the ball of conversation rolling to an unusually original tune. To-night he felt handicapped by an unattended force,—two unattended forces. The first of these was Desmoulins. The second was Stormmouth.

Desmoulins was superb, in his glory. On the top wave of apparent and bewildering achievement concerning his venture, he emitted *double entendres* with startling fidelity, and then and there took a stand with his contemporaries which afterwards became proverbial,—a stand for unflinching audacity and unadulterated perceptiveness and presumption.

For in their biassed souls there nestled that symmetry which is the salvation of the French critic,—the poise which controls theoretically, if not always practically, in no mean measure, a firm conviction of the true as opposed to the spurious. They knew Desmoulins rang false; but he held the purse-strings, and so, outwardly, they cringed to him, inwardly regretting that so unworthy a man should have, through some odd and esoteric element, been placed in a position of trust.

They feasted until an early hour of the morning. Then they withdrew, with promises of great things for Mademoiselle Brilla and oily compliments for their hostess.

Priscilla kissed Constance good-night, and sent her up to her own little white-and-pink bedroom to pass the night. Then she turned to the count, who had asked her for a short interview before leaving.

Stornmouth was chatting with Aunt Mildred. Priscilla and the count withdrew to the farther corner of the apartment.

"Mademoiselle," began the count, somewhat awkwardly for a man of his race and reported breeding, "I have but one question to ask. I think you must have suspected for some time what that question is?"

Priscilla's lips trembled slightly.

"Mademoiselle," he continued, "I wish to lay my title,"—this was said slowly and deliberately, with an excessive unction which was admirable, considering the worthlessness of the offering,—“and my name, at your feet.”

"Yes," said Priscilla, dully. She held her little lace handkerchief in her hands. She was twisting it cruelly.

"Mademoiselle, may I venture to hope?"

There was a short, distinct pause, in which, to Priscilla's chagrin, the conversation at the other end of the room seemed to have ceased. She waited a moment. Then she said, gently,—

"I cannot give you an answer, count, until you have asked my father's consent. He arrives the day after to-morrow, on the Umbria. You must lay your plans before him. If he offers no opposition——"

"Yes, mademoiselle," said the count. He seized her hand impetuously, bent, and pressed his dyed moustache upon it.

Priscilla withdrew the little satin palm hurriedly with an enigmatic expression and a vivid, pained flush.

"If he gives his consent, I will offer no opposition."

The count swelled visibly. Into his crafty eyes crept a look which made Priscilla shudder. "Mademoiselle is an angel," he ejaculated, in a husky voice.

Priscilla checked him peremptorily. "I said," she repeated, in an odd, frightened sort of voice, "if my father offers no objection, count."

The count frowned, visibly disconcerted. "As you will, mademoiselle."

"Quite so," agreed Priscilla, dryly. "Come here," she added, "at eleven o'clock on Thursday morning."

"Entendu."

"And now, good-night."

The count smiled with a look of badly concealed satisfaction. Then, with a low bow to Stornmouth, who was regarding him with visible contempt, he stepped over the threshold. Aunt Mildred followed him. She wished to suggest something in the treatment of the count's criticism on the new prima donna.

Priscilla stooped to pick a rose off the floor. It had fallen from the loosened coils of her hair. She sighed wearily.

Stornmouth leaned forward quickly—he had walked towards Pris-



cilla as the count and Aunt Mildred made their way towards the door—and held the rose in his grasp before she reached it.

As Priscilla raised her head and looked at him, the color rushed in an uncontrollable flood to her face, investing it with a vivid beauty which made Stormmouth draw his breath with a little hissing sound in between his teeth.

"Let me keep it," he said, collectedly,—*"the rose, I mean."*

"What for?" demanded Priscilla, aggressively.

"It reminds me," remarked Stormmouth, with assumed nonchalance, "of a girl I knew once who was faithful to herself, to her womanhood, to her future; who spurned with horror anything less than her birthright of principle and integrity."

Priscilla trembled visibly.

"A paragon, no doubt, your friend," she replied, in a choked sort of voice.

"No," returned Stormmouth, coolly; "only that best and sweetest of God's creations, a true woman."

"Since when," demanded Priscilla, her vivid color fading to a delicious pink and her lips pouting rebelliously,—*"since when have you constituted yourself a judge of the opposite sex?"*

Her eyes met Stormmouth's steadily. Hers were cold and hard.

"Since I loved—a woman," announced Stormmouth, unflinchingly.

Then, before she could retaliate, before she could turn to leave him as she had intended doing, he stepped forward, and laid two gentle albeit powerful hands upon her shoulders. It seemed an age that they stood there, in bitter silence, his forbidding, stern eyes steadily endeavoring to force her obstinate lids to lift. Her lips quivered helplessly, like the lips of a grieved child.

"Let go," she finally managed to burst forth; but her strangled voice, which she was endeavoring to make natural, came only in a hoarse whisper, to her intense surprise and shame. "It is unmanly of you to hold me thus. Let me go."

"No," said Stormmouth's voice, very gently,—it seemed very far away to poor Priscilla, whose pulse was beating in incomprehensible wild thuds against her ears,—*"no, I will not let you go, my beloved, until you lift your eyes to mine and tell me that you do not love me, and that you do love the count."*

There was a long pause. Then Priscilla whispered something very low, to attain cognizance of which Stormmouth was obliged to stoop his head very near to hers.

"Cruel," said the little voice.

"No," asserted Stormmouth; *"only just."*

There was another silence. Priscilla miserably remembered, years afterwards, a street-cry she heard just then, which rang against her unduly sharpened faculties like the pendulum of a joy clock striking out the hours of a novel bliss unspeakable, and accentuating the nucleus of the sweetest, strangest pain she had ever felt. Then, helplessly, as though governed by an unseen and irresistible force, her little face a mask of pain and frightened pride, she raised her eyes to those stern compelling ones above.

They held the righteous force of a supreme command.

When souls meet and greet one another, acknowledging conviction across the almost insuperable gulf of conservatism and custom, laying bare a vital truth which storms order out of chaos and sublime peace out of past turmoil, the recording angels fold their wings and steal away, appeased.

Then came Stormmouth's voice, as though out of a mist.

"What folly is that other craving?" it asked, peremptorily. Whereas before the tone had been harsh and almost cruel, it was now rich and full.

Only a little helpless gesture, as sweet as a bird's song in a thicket.

"And you would struggle against our inevitable, my beloved? such a sweet and rich inevitable?"

Still silence.

Stormmouth's hand crept strongly under the mutinous chin. "My little girl," he said, "never mind how or why you have chosen to almost break my heart. I will forgive everything you have *not* said or done in the past few miserable weeks if you will lift those arms and lay them about my neck, and in the doing trust me as a child trusts its mother."

"I cannot," said Priscilla's voice, broken and trembling, but very firm in the settled resolve it contained.

"Why so?"

There was another pregnant silence. Then, very positively, she lifted her soft palms, and, quite steadily, pushed Stormmouth's hands off from her shoulders. She raised her head and confronted their owner.

"There are reasons," she said, enigmatically. Her eyes, to Stormmouth's intense consternation, were filled with blinding tears. Quite unaffectedly she wiped them away.

"Reasons?" quoted Stormmouth, with extraordinary emphasis, his sternly controlled wrath and jealousy suddenly springing to life and quenching his sense of justice. "What reasons?"

"Never mind," she whispered, miserably.

"Never mind!" he repeated. "If that is not like a woman! Can't you see that this is the crisis of my happiness and yours?"

Priscilla shook her head a trifle obstinately.

"Very well," he continued, still more wrathfully, beginning now to pace the room with strong impatient strides; "we will 'never mind,' then. Ah, you wilful woman, don't you know that with a man a joy like this untasted is as cruel as a jagged wound un-nursed?"

"Let me go," cried Priscilla, suddenly, wildly now, her sweet face stricken as though with a mortal illness, her hands wringing themselves together unconsciously and with acute pathos.

Stormmouth smiled bitterly. There was half a yard between him and this rebellious little bundle of femininity whom he loved better than his life. He wanted to crush her fiercely to his heart and still her sobs and kiss away her tears. All he did was to reach one gentle

hand forward and lay it wonderingly on her hair, the prettiest hair, as soft and fine and far more wilful than corn-silk, with little clumps of rebellious curls along the temples and in the creamy nape of the warm baby neck.

"Go," he commanded, quietly. And then, as she did not stir, he added, "I am not holding you, my beloved." Still Priscilla did not move. As though spellbound, she stood there, drooping under that unexpected gentle caress.

"Priscilla," said Stormmouth's voice. There was no command in it now. It was an appeal.

The little figure, with a visible and supreme effort, turned away from that appeal deliberately and marched towards the door.

He sprang forward. It took only two strides to reach the door, upon the handle of which Priscilla had already laid her hand.

He faced the little figure, upright now, peremptorily, a magnificent condemnatory scorn in his whole bearing.

"You love the count," he shouted, furiously, in a veritable tempest of wonder and revolt.

And then Priscilla, that remarkable, elusive, bewitching, incorrigible Priscilla, turned towards him at last.

She was trembling no longer. The tears had vanished. The exquisite face had taken on a chiselled sternness, concentrated and set as Stormmouth's own. There were righteous contempt and unmitigated indignation in every feature of the countenance, in every line of the figure which had made Stormmouth's rainy and sunny weather for the past tumultuous eighteen months.

"You have taken the trouble to assert that fact," said Priscilla, in her own clear and steady tones, which at this particular moment were as cold and incisive as tempered steel, "once too often, Mr. Stormmouth. You crossed the ocean to inform my father of it. You have returned, no doubt, to accentuate the fact of your individual talent for private detective business to me, the victim of it. Since you have mastered the case with such capability, why request the defendant to confirm your decision?"

Stormmouth fell back, aghast.

"You say, you have said, you believe, I 'love the count,'" cried Priscilla, with a superb gesture of ironical import. "Perhaps you will be good enough to vouchsafe me the name of your informant upon this interesting subject?"

"Yourself," Stormmouth replied, unexpectedly. Like a flash, all the past months' revulsion of feeling sprang to life in poisonous fashion and filled his veins with a seething flood, which put out common sense and cool judgment with wonderful effectiveness for the moment. "Your actions, your evasions, your happiness in his presence, your confusion."

He stopped. Priscilla had turned and measured him from head to heel. Somehow he felt as though he were losing ground.

"You have let go," Priscilla said, unkindly, "your principal charm, my friend. Its name was self-control."

Then she laughed, not a pretty laugh; a little, wild, strange imita-

tion of the sound which is supposed to indicate mirth. This sound seemed to ring a knell of its own.

"I will offer you a suggestion, Mr. Stornmouth," the girl remarked, with a strong emphasis on the *Mr.* "Never judge a woman by what she says, or by what she does."

"What *is* one to judge her by?" he inquired, desperately, with perhaps pardonable curiosity.

"Don't judge her at all," she said, imperatively.

With a mutinous expression which was essentially lovely, Priscilla laid her hand once more upon the door-knob. "Since you say I love the count," said the sweet voice, "go smoke your pipe upon it, O wily dissector of the feminine heart, and pleasant dreams to you."

The door opened and closed. She was gone.

"Constance," whispered Priscilla, guardedly, as she settled herself upon her pillow, to a little crumpled mass of creamy muslin and tossed inky hair which nestled beside her, "Constance, are you asleep?"

"Yes," answered Constance, blinking an eye open.

"Aren't men fools when they are in love?" asked Priscilla, irrelevantly.

"Idiots," returned Constance, cheerfully, with conviction. "But I like idiots. Don't you?"

"I simply adore them," murmured Priscilla,—“when I get the best of them.” With this frank confession of incipient villany, this wily practitioner in retaliative methods fell peacefully asleep.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

THE following morning Constance's bedchamber was like a conservatory of flowers. There were bouquets from the scene-shifters, expectant of a fee from the new prima donna; from the chorus, also to insure that its good graces should be recognized in monetary form; from the orchestra; from the orchestra-leader; from the *claque*, a bill of three hundred francs for so-called "gratuitous services;" from Geoffroy; from Desmoulins; from de Lacaze; from Stornmouth; from the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; from the entire Pension Picaud; and from numerous persons whom Constance had forgotten, but who availed themselves of this auspicious occasion to refresh her memory of them.

She had not yet risen. With newspaper clippings of every size and hue beside her, she nestled among her pillows. Most of the printed criticisms were ecstatic in their praises. The new prima donna was compared with every song-bird of the planet. Her grace was lauded to the skies; her voice was denominated "the sweetest the New World has yet sent us." Her acting was universally deplored. This did not disconcert her, as she had expected much worse, and rejoiced at any evidence of good will. She entirely ignored the fact that the criticisms had been coerced by Priscilla's diplomacy. She was ignorant of the true inwardness of professional human nature.

It was only later she discovered that just this outspoken praise of her was the direst calamity which could have befallen her.

To-day she was happy, strangely, dreamily happy; contented, like a sick child convalescing from long days of pain and weakness, amidst her faithful friends, no longer buffeted by the storm-tossing in the past, which she now contemplated with a shudder and wondered fearfully at having passed through unscathed. The sympathy in Doxie's face had been the first evidence she received of how great and brave had been her fight, in the face of circumstances unsuspected in the realm of home, girlhood, and loving care.

Doxie called early, and left a message that he would take her for a walk that afternoon. Priscilla would not hear of Constance returning to the *pension*, for the present at least. She petted and cosseted her inordinately. She astonished Constance by informing her succinctly, during the course of that long happy morning, that she had given up the stage.

"What changed you in your purpose?"

"Things," returned Priscilla, airily. She began a conversation on a totally different subject. Constance had signed a three-years' contract with Geoffroy to sing when called upon, to learn a new opera in fifteen days if required, to remain in the city all summer, through all the opera season, as well as winter, unless able to present a doctor's certificate that she was so ill she required a change of air, and numerous other petty details which she ignored at the time, but which later assumed gigantic proportions.

"To-morrow," Priscilla announced, "the count calls to demand my hand, and dad arrives from New York." She was looking out of the window into the street. There was a flower-cart on the corner, purple with Russian violets and yellow with mimosa. Constance glanced at her sharply. All she could perceive was the tip of a tiny ear, and two hands clasped firmly behind their owner's waist.

"What are you going to do about it?" she inquired, with assumed indifference.

"What do you suppose?" said Priscilla.

"I know," asserted Constance, positively, "that you will refuse him."

"What an idea!" ejaculated Priscilla, sharply, turning suddenly, and disclosing a pair of innocent wide eyes and a delicious mischievous smile. "What, may I ask, induces you to suppose anything of the kind?"

"Intuition," Constance remarked, just as wickedly.

"What have you *intuished*?"

"Don't be a fool, Priscilla, and throw away your happiness."

"You are a fine person to counsel wisdom," cried Priscilla, daringly. "How about Mr. Doxie?"

"Well, *what* about Mr. Doxie?"

"He is the man," Priscilla asserted, delightedly, with intense conviction, "you sent away from you. I feel it in my bones."

"What makes you think so?"

"There was the sweetest look in your face last night," said Pris-

cilla, "when you fell asleep; and, my dear, I saw Mr. Doxie give you one look at the supper-table, which taught me everything I wished to know. It was perfectly beautiful." This with an expression of supreme satisfaction which was, in its way, irresistible.

"He is the man——"

"Thank God!"

"I refused. I had not finished.—What had you said to Mr. Stormmouth last night before I came up-stairs, to put him in such a bad humor?"

"I?" cried Priscilla. "What could an insignificant young woman like me possibly say to so important a person as Mr. Stormmouth to disconcert him in any manner whatsoever?"

"H'm!" Constance murmured. She was gazing at the ceiling. The end of the remark was incomprehensible.

"What did you say?"

"I said nothing," returned Constance.

"Yes, you did. You seemed to doubt the truth of my last statement."

"Far from it," remarked Constance, coolly. "I believed it."

"Believed that what I said or did was of no importance to John Stormmouth?" she asked, rather shrilly.

"Exactly."

"H'm! I presume you consider yourself very clever."

"Not at all."

"A reader of character, and so forth."

"By no means."

"Whatever you consider yourself," cried Priscilla, irritatedly, "you never proved yourself so entirely at sea as at present."

"Why so?"

"John Stormmouth," Priscilla announced, superbly, "adores me. He simply worships the ground I walk on."

"Nonsense!"

"What do you mean by 'nonsense'?" Priscilla demanded. "What do you know about it, anyway?"

"Nothing," said Constance. "I merely consider it a pity he cannot care for you, since you are so absolutely lovable." The implied compliment was administered apparently as salt to savor the uncompromising nature of the statement which preceded it.

"A pity he does not care for me!" Priscilla repeated, scornfully. "Absurd! He is at my feet,—literally at my feet."

"And you at the count's feet. The course of true love never did run smooth."

"I at the count's feet!" cried Priscilla. "I at the count's feet! Where did you get that idea?"

"Observation," Constance replied, mendaciously: she was splashing like a fish now, in her bath in an adjoining room, and was obliged to keep up her end of the conversation under difficulties.

"For once," Priscilla stormed, with a stamp of her foot, which was happily concealed by the thickness of the rug upon which she stood,—*"for once you are mistaken."*



"Indeed?"

"Utterly mistaken. I don't care the snap of my finger for the count; for fifty counts; for all the titles in Europe. There!"

"Admirable!" said Constance. "What's a count, anyway?"

"That's just it. What's a count who doesn't count?"

"Zero," said Constance. Then, as though thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their exalted discourse, she added, flippantly, "Who ever heard of a count who counted two, after all?"

To this obvious effort of the intellect Priscilla scorned to reply.

"I can't imagine," she began, tearfully, as Constance emerged from her bath in a crash, looking like a rose-leaf steeped in dew, and the two girls seated themselves before the fire with their nail-polishers,— "I can't imagine why anybody ever supposed for an instant that I desired a title."

"You *did* desire one."

"I did *not*."

"Well, never mind. We won't discuss it: so long as you have altered your mind, we won't quarrel." Then, very gently, she turned towards Priscilla. "You do love him, don't you?" she whispered, in a wheedling little tone which was essentially girlish. "He is so entirely worthy of it. He has nothing so much as your happiness at heart. You have made him sufficiently miserable."

"I have not yet finished with him," interrupted Priscilla.

"What has he done to you, to make you so cruel?"

"He has supposed," cried Priscilla, with intense indignation of a boiling-over quality which would have filled the soul of a student in emotions with awe,— "he has dared to suppose that I—I loved a title."

"Well?"

"A mean, miserable title, with a perfect reptile of a man attached to it,—a man whom it makes my blood curdle to approach,—whose glance is poison, whose touch is a disgrace."

"He was jealous."

Priscilla, apparently, did not hear.

"He has dared to think," she cried, "that I, Priscilla Delno, a God-fearing woman,"—this in a burst of palpable satisfaction at having mastered a phrase which, so to speak, filled the bill,— "would stoop to pick up a miserable, middle-aged, dyed-moustached, muddy-eyed little whippersnapper like that?"

"There was every reason to suppose it," returned Constance, biting her lips hard to keep from breaking into a ringing laugh. "You evinced no disgust for him in your treatment of him."

"Certainly not, under the circumstances."

"What circumstances?"

"You," Priscilla answered, tragically, "*you* ask me to name the circumstances? You must be blind, stone-blind."

Constance stared, and dropped her nail-polisher.

"Priscilla, what do you mean?"

"Constance," said Priscilla, with tears in her eyes, "is it possible you have not guessed my reason for treating the count as I have?"

"What do you mean?"

"You too have misunderstood and . . . reviled me?"

"Quite so," said Constance, despairingly, unaware of what she was accusing herself.

"You have thought I intended to marry the count?"

"What else was I to suppose?"

Priscilla drew up her slight figure stiffly. "I will explain." And then, with a little half-sob, half-laugh, she threw herself on the rug at Constance's feet, and put her arms about her.

"I did it for you, goose," she said.

"For me?" the other repeated, with great astonished eyes.

"For you. The Count Adolphe François Baradat de Lacaze is the musical critic on the *Figaro*. The *Figaro* is the most influential newspaper in Paris. The game has been worth the candle." Then this able diplomat clasped her pink-tipped fingers about her knees, and fell to gazing at the fire.

"Priscilla," Constance vouchsafed, faintly, "you are a perfect darling. I am going to tell John Stornmouth all about it."

Priscilla turned. Every feature was quivering; her lips were white.

"Constance," she commanded, "leave John Stornmouth to me. I will teach him that there are American girls and American girls. I am evidently one of the kind he has never even suspected."

"But, Priscilla——"

"Leave John Stornmouth to me," Priscilla repeated, ominously.

---

## CHAPTER XII.

On Thursday the conclave was held in the library.

Judge Delno was seated in a Francis I. chair. His long pale hands, muscular and remarkable for their expression of reserved force, clasped firmly the carved arms. Priscilla leaned over the back.

Stornmouth sat beside Judge Delno. There was a window behind them. It overlooked a court.

On the left of the judge were seated Miss Mildred Delno and Stephen Doxie. Facing him were Desmoulins and de Lacaze.

The proposition was submitted to the judge by Desmoulins, who reseated himself easily as he finished his peroration; but, unable to conceal entirely an inward perturbation, he tugged violently at one corner of his perfumed moustache. De Lacaze's face was the color of old wax. He sat intently considering the visible and invisible features of the case, his muddy eyes shifting furtively from countenance to countenance as Desmoulins accentuated the salient facts, made good his strength, and kept out of sight as much as possible the weak points of the proposition.

Judge Delno listened. There is a silence which means nothing. There is a silence which hints at possible developments. Judge Delno's silence belonged to the latter order. At a glance he had taken in the unmitigated villany of the two smug physiognomies which submitted themselves to his experienced scrutiny. He sympathetically

nurtured the knowledge of Stornmouth's policy, which was to expose the opposition plot to Priscilla in case she experienced any weakness in the direction of foreign suitors. He comprehended, in less time than it takes to write these words, the tools which his daughter and sister were supposed by their manipulators to exemplify under their practised hands, oiled by incessant contact with the gambling methods, moral, mental, and physical, brought to bear upon life's issues. His proud spirit was quivering with righteous wrath and a seething contempt for these specimens of a nation he had elected to despise.

To pit an American, vigorous, alive, armed to the hilt with tried capacity for innate godliness, firm in the knowledge of his personal integrity, against a Frenchman, talented, crafty, wicked, and deliberately oblique in his methods, is like nothing so much as pitting a buffalo against one of those exquisite chameleons which lie along sun-kissed walls in Spain, changing color with every movement. The buffalo confronts any contrary issue with a sounding bellow which announces at the start his intention. Then, head down, he surges wildly forward. If he is met with a counter-thrust or a rally, or is lassoed into reluctant, surly, temporary submission, he still worries and gives outspoken vent to his contempt for any method of attack less frankly courageous than his own.

What is perforce integrity to the buffalo is considered a barefaced lack of method by the chameleon. What reads ability or perspicacity or perfection of treatment to the chameleon is translated dastardly cowardice and bewildering and unnecessary complication by the buffalo. One is wily, insinuating, and deceptive, rejoicing in treatment of warfare as a scientific problem wrought from the rough into a pattern unsuspected by any but the most artistic of intriguers. The other is a touch-and-go hero, with defiance for his first weapon, audacity for his second, and stand-and-deliver exactions for his third.

Is the buffalo vanquished, he storms and struggles, and in some cases dies in durance vile, but in any case vigorously unrenunciative of one iota of his theories or principles; just a great soul maltreated, pin-pricked into recalcitrant submission. If the chameleon is mastered, he turns slowly in the sun, thus evading any perceptible evidence of failure, and, revealing himself of another color, shifts any responsibility by thus eloquently bidding his adversary believe he was not that chameleon, but his neighbor.

Judge Delno in the present instance held the characteristics of the buffalo to some extent, if not wholly. It had been his portion to deal with the worthy and the unworthy, with spurious and genuine metal. He had practised his profession in one of the greatest metropolises of the world. He knew the elusive tendencies of villains, their dislike to calling a spade a spade, their nerves of steel and their methods of iron. He recognized, like all students of human nature, that there is more ability displayed in practised villany than is often considered tenable in the highways and byways of practised integrity. In a measure, he was crippled, because in a strange country and among strange faces.

He listened to Desmoulins patiently. There was no evidence in

his well-governed countenance of his recognition of his adversaries' strong and weak points.

When Desmoulins had finished, Judge Delno inclined his head.

"I am to understand, then," he remarked, "that you place the case for your friend the Count de Lacaze, owing to his inability to speak fluently in our language."

"You are, sir," from Desmoulins.

Judge Delno turned towards de Lacaze. "You speak English, sir?" he demanded, unexpectedly.

"I do."

"I am to understand that you wish to lay your title and your vast estates before me for consideration; that you have reason to trust that my daughter will reciprocate your regard. Is she assured I am willing she should thus follow her own inclination?"

The count bowed. "Mademoiselle Delno," he said, "has been so kind as to listen when I have told her of my intention."

"Is this so, Priscilla?"

"I told him," said Priscilla, very low,—so low that only Stornmouth and her father caught the words,—"that if you gave your consent I would consider the matter."

"What," inquired the judge, blandly, "is your income, count?"

This straightforward attack was a premeditated blow at his adversaries' suavity. It accomplished its purpose with miraculous swiftness.

The count stirred a little uneasily. Desmoulins darted at him a warning glance.

"My estates," he returned, evasively, with a visible effort to seem unconcerned, "my estates, sir, would be considered sufficient guarantee in France to insure your daughter and her children against disaster, should such disaster overtake us."

"Ah! Of what do those estates consist?"

"There is a property in Touraine," the count announced, "and one in Lombardy. Before my grandfather's estate was confiscated under the Revolution he owned the entire village of Chambourliez in the Vosges. When he was obliged to flee from Paris, taking every atom of personal property he could with him for fear of confiscation, he sold that village for ten million francs, to obtain ready money."

"Were you his heir?"

Desmoulins rose. "You are subjecting my friend to a positive inquisition," he cried, indignantly. "Things are not conducted after this fashion in France. A man of title is considered a sufficient *parti* without a fortune to back him up."

"A man of title, yes," returned the judge. Then for the first time he looked piercingly at Desmoulins.

"You, sir," he said, "instituted recently in New York a search in regard to my daughter's family, property, and fair fame, did you not?"

There was a movement all through the room. Priscilla lifted her head with an indignant flush, which spread from her forehead to her chin and remained there for five minutes. Stornmouth stopped toying with a silver paper-cutter which was lying on a First Empire table near him. Doxie threw back his head with a grim smile.

"You are pleased," replied Desmoulins, just as coolly, exhibiting admirably strong nerve and undeniable capacity for ways and means esoteric and remarkable under fire, "to deal in enigmas."

"Perhaps. That word apparently conveys an opposite meaning in France from what it does in America. You deny, then, that you instituted a search into my daughter's connection in New York?"

"I deny nothing. I affirm nothing. It is customary in France, when a man of title proposes uniting his family name with a person of insignificant parentage, to inform himself of that person's past, present, and future. We call it taking *renseignements*. The count may have thus informed himself without my instigation."

"By *renseignements*"—the judge pronounced the word with some difficulty—"you mean to convey that you require recommendations for your intended beneficiary,—recommendations after the fashion of a master who demands of a cook references from his last place, or a horse of whom is exacted his pedigree by his would-be purchaser."

"Yes, monsieur."

The judge turned towards the count.

"Am I to understand that *you* made such inquiries?"

"I made no inquiries," returned the count. "Your daughter was responsible alone for my desire to unite my old name with youth and beauty."

The judge looked at Doxie. "Mr. Doxie," said he, quietly, "you will oblige me by reading to these gentlemen the story of a nefarious plot which came to my notice a few days before I left New York. It is a letter, gentlemen," he said, pleasantly,—turning to Desmoulins and the count,—“which was brought before me under peculiar circumstances. It was found in the pocket of a dead man. As it contained a signature strangely like yours, sir,” speaking to Desmoulins, who was strikingly pale and was muttering something under his breath, “I made the comparison yesterday morning when I received your note requesting this interview. The signatures are one and the same. It seemed to me as pretty a case of compound felony as I have ever known.”

"Find," Doxie read, from a letter he had drawn from his pocket, "the record of the young woman's antecedents and social status. Is the old man gullible? Is the mamma to be coerced out of her ducats? Will the filthy lucre be forthcoming when the big move is made? De Lacaze is up to his ears in debt. He desires a wife with a big *dot*. If her antecedents are a little off color, so much the better. De Lacaze can hold then the whip hand, and threaten exposure if his demands are rejected. The young woman's name is Priscilla Delno. Her address is 49 West Fifty-Fifth Street."

There was a dead silence.

Then a little figure sprang forward, a girl's figure in a pale pink gown, with a face like a flower, and tear-filled eyes, and little shaking hands held forth towards Desmoulins.

"You said that of me?" cried Priscilla, "of *me*, a girl who had never done you any harm, monsieur; a girl who had made you her friend; a girl who thought that men were friends and helpers, *not liars*."

"Pah!" ejaculated Desmoulins. "One must live, mademoiselle," he added, sullenly. The winning card was in the enemy's hand with a vengeance.

Over his stormy soul there swept a whiff of better days, days when he had stolen in, a little lad, among the sanctuary lamps, to prostrate himself before the image of the Virgin or a patron saint,—days wherein he, before his version of life had burned his promise of peace and righteous attainment very low indeed, had dreamed dreams too of a land wherein love was a golden afternoon and—— Pah! the game was up.

"Be silent, Priscilla. Come here, my daughter."

Priscilla took up her old stand behind her father's chair.

"Mademoiselle is melodramatic," Desmoulins began, in a stinging voice. "If she were Mademoiselle Brilla, for instance——"

"Silence!" hissed Stornmouth, violently. He had been gazing at Priscilla with a puzzled expression which set the blood firm in her eyes and cheeks. He was breathing a little unevenly.

Desmoulins checked himself. Perhaps the game was not up yet. Who knew but that these foreigners, with their strange methods and novel plans of action, were in need of a social uplift after all? He would wait a little.

Judge Delno opened a book which lay on a table beside him. "I find," he remarked, after close perusal of a clause it contained, "that in France the penalty for compound felony is a fine. They draw it milder than in New York. There the penalty may consist in a forfeiture of estates."

"You have no evidence," returned Desmoulins, having by this time recovered all his suavity of demeanor, and palpably stung into action, chameleon-like changing his color,—“you have no evidence, sir, that that letter is not a bogus one.”

"Pardon me. I have that evidence." The retort cut across Desmoulins' speech like a knife-blade across a deer's throat.

"What evidence?"

"Your own signature."

"Ah!" The "ah" was slow and salient. "The letter you hold in your hand was not written by me. De Lacaze wrote it. I stood at his elbow: inadvertently he signed my name."

"Is that so?"

De Lacaze bowed his head silently. It was a poor move, he considered, a dastardly inefficiency, unworthy of the tempered steel of most of his methods, which it would have taken an expert to unravel or even suspect; but when the game was such a tempting one and the subject-matter so delicious, he considered that he might as well conduct his obvious strategy with visible ambiguity: she was so eminently desirable, that little maiden in the pink morning gown, with a flush like a strawberry-stain in the smooth contour of her cheek, with that storm of revulsion in her flashing passionate eyes, the palpitating rise and fall of her breast. He set his teeth in his under lip hard. "Yes, monsieur, I wrote it," he continued, quietly. "As *mon ami* states, he stood at my elbow, having all along exhibited a keen interest in my



welfare. He has in more than one case dictated my letters, being more cognizant of ways and means foreign than myself, who have never quitted the shores of my beloved France." The latter sentence was accompanied by an ironical glance at Desmoulins, which was not lost upon Judge Delno.

"Which proves," remarked the judge, ironically, "that you indited both letters, count,—since they are both in the same handwriting."

There was a pause.

De Lacaze answered nothing. If silence were the game, he would play the game of silence.

"Friendship," cried Stornmouth, gayly, "O beautiful and faithful Friendship, how many sins are committed in thy name! In America, for instance, a man conducts his own love-making. I should counsel you to pursue that policy, count."

"One would be dull indeed," returned de Lacaze, with a snarl and a diabolical pertinence in the covert insinuation, "did not one perceive that the advised policy is your own, monsieur."

"Precisely," rejoined Stornmouth. He stemmed peremptorily the venom of the counter-thrust with a placidity which forced its import to glance off his own weakness, leaving it apparently as polished and unassailed as its propounder's impassive countenance.

### CHAPTER XIII.

"TAKING into consideration," recommenced Judge Delno, after a short lull in the proceedings, in which they one and all made an effort at self-control and remembered that there were women present, one of whom represented the bone of contention in the case,—“taking into consideration the fact that our ways are as totally opposed as the poles, I shall put a few questions which it would afford me a keen satisfaction for many reasons, not all of which are entirely personal, if you would answer, count.” He ignored Desmoulins, to the visible perturbation of that worthy.

“What questions?”

“Are you aware that in the marriage you propose there is evidence of true nobility,—nobility disassociated generally from marriages of this sort? Your demand is apparently entirely disinterested. You give all, you demand nothing.”

The count rubbed his hands together violently. “It is understood in France,” he finally stated, blandly, “that the family of the *fiancée* offers with her a sum sufficient to insure her husband against disaster,—since, obviously, he assumes with marriage its expenses, its responsibilities, its reforms.” He paused. “That sum is called a *dot*.”

“The aforesaid *dot* to be reserved for the wife in case of misfortune befalling her husband?”

“Not so. That *dot* to be paid down to her suitor’s bankers, under the assumption that the income to be drawn from it will be hers as well as his.”

"Admirable! And what is his is hers?"

The count cleared his throat. "Unfortunately for the woman," he murmured, a trifle awkwardly, "the law in France is what we call *raide*."

"Unelastic," translated Stornmouth, humorously, if not literally.

"The wife's property is invariably subservient to the will of her husband," continued the count, with a scowl.

"Justly," remarked the judge, suavely, "if she receives in the marriage contract a sum equivalent to the sum advanced by her parents to be accredited to her. The——"

"Pardon, monsieur. When an American woman of property unites herself with a distinguished French family, she receives the title only in exchange for her personal property."

"And her husband's property,—what of that?"

"That stands in her husband's name—with her own."

"You mean to say, then, that she buys his title with her money, her purity, and her youth, demands no security against possible disaster, and is supposed to be thankful and contented that her choice still respects her for such an evidence of individual imbecility?"

"Monsieur puts it harshly. Why does monsieur presume that a Frenchman desires to unite himself with a foreigner? In so doing the Parisian renounces his personal satisfaction for all time. A foreigner, to a Parisian born and bred, is a specimen both uninteresting and incomprehensible. A Parisian understands and is understood by his own class, by his own customs, by his own heart. It is rarely, unless in middle age, if monsieur will take into consideration most Franco-American unions, that the Parisian is the first to give evidence of a desire to sacrifice himself to a foreigner, even though that foreigner be as young and beautiful as Miss Delno." The count laid his hand upon that portion of his anatomy which is popularly supposed to represent the place where the heart should be. He bowed very low indeed, possibly to make up somewhat for the bald cruelty of his proposition.

"I will put it more harshly still. Your title, it is obvious, is your only claim. You propose to offer it for a consideration."

"Monsieur is pleased to strip my proposition of its bloom."

"Pah! it has no bloom. It is as starved of ultimate promise, as devoid of the beauty of hope and aspiration, as barren of the sacredness we Americans associate with the divine duties, the tender promise of true conjugal union, as you are devoid of any sense of honor to make it. You call yourself a nobleman. Know, then, there is not a savage in our far West who understands so little the law of exchange as do you. He chooses his squaw out of his tribe. He may give her nothing in exchange for her gewgaws and her maidenhood but a tomahawk, and a pair of arms with brawn in them, and a soul teeming with the strength of his savage forefathers, but he knows the law,—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. He takes his bride to his heart the way a lion takes his mate. He gives her his manhood, or his protection,—call it what you will. In any case he stands between her and lesser brutes who would snatch her from his arms. A fig for your

vaunted civilization! Give me, were I a girl, a virgin man out of one of our Western forests, with the stir of life's combat in his veins, without a sou, only his birthright, the keen desire in him to succor the weak; give me a man among men, not a fop who seeks to sell his debts, dispose of his title and yet still retain it, figure up his bride as a means of financial reinstatement, to be coerced and finally abused and thrown out when stripped of her helpfulness in the time of need——"

"But, monsieur——"

But Judge Delno, like a war-horse with the sound of the battle-cry in his ears, continued. "Civilization," he cried,—"what has it taught you, you foreigners, with your vaunted age we lack, with your vaunted art we are struggling to acquire, with your vaunted vice which unhappily we in our younger generation are striving to attain? It has taught you to lay low your manhood and put in its place a thing called self, a self which digs a grave for and buries and raises a headstone to personal integrity. When birds nest they nest with birds. When cattle mate they mate with cattle. When a Frenchman demands his 'right' to claim a bride he offers a stone for bread, a rotten carcass in exchange for incarnate purity."

A clear voice broke in abruptly. It was the voice of Desmoulins.

"Who asks us to sell our titles for your lucre? The American. Who comes out of the East and West with his ducats clanking loudly and his bragging voice declaring he will buy art, heart, and emotions? The American. He never thinks how we regard him. He acts from the stand-point alone of how he regards us. How we laugh! *mais*, how we laugh! We have lived; he has yet to grow. We have suffered. He is longing to throw himself into the fray and to be gored alive rather than to wait for time to ripen him. If we choose to gore him, who can blame us? It is what he has demanded, what he has cried for, like a sick child whimpering for the moon."

"To continue with the case in hand," interrupted Stornmouth. For the first time, he admired Desmoulins. After all, in this Frenchman's misused soul there dwelt a spark of that fire which assails the lowest of human creatures at times, that fire which flames out into vital protest in silent hours and demands the truth as a feverish invalid calls for water to quench his thirst. For the first time Stornmouth judged the American abroad from the French stand-point. It was not a pleasant stand-point to this virile specimen of its best blood, its best methods, its noblest intentions; but, endeavor as he might, he could not deny the fact that Desmoulins' accusation held a semblance of truth as regarded a small number of his compatriots, who had visited France, bought up its titles and estates, and lost a considerable record for keen patriotism or national fidelity in the process. He knew that the exception was not the rule. He, in justice, could not blame Desmoulins for thinking otherwise.

"I refuse," the judge calmly announced, "to permit my daughter to enter into any such alliance,—unless," turning towards Priscilla, "she loves you."

Priscilla, her eyes ablaze, had been leaning over the back of her father's chair.

She grew visibly pale as she raised her spirited young head at his call. She stepped forward slightly, and leaned one little hand upon Judge Delno's shoulder as though for support,—for support in the argument which had been hammering against her temples for weeks, and which, under existing circumstances, at last took an adequate stand in all its acquired strength,—a stand which established conviction in the hearts of those for and against her protest, who listened to its young propounder *nolens volens*.

"It has occurred to me, count," she said, very gently, with that fearless method of attack which makes American girlhood the vital and bonny thing it is to home masculine hearts which respect it and foreign masculine hearts which seek to oppress it and to lay its young strength and vigor and brightness so very low in demanding of it its worst,—“it has occurred to me more than once lately that the main part of what I, in my inexperience, should call desirability in matrimony has been left out of your proposition. Until now I have not spoken. It seemed to me useless. It seemed to me you would not understand it. It is so very sweet and dear. Its name is love. With us—we American girls—it comes or it does not come; but when it comes it comes for good. And when it comes there is not much ambition in it, I think. Sacrifice too goes out,—a word we have forgotten. Sometimes, I know, girls marry titles and are happy, but not on account of the title. In those cases the title is merely an accessory to their happiness, just as it should be to yours. Their husbands welcome it, for both their sakes, as a fortunate circumstance in life which, unworthily enough, bids people lacking dignity of character to bow down to them.

"You asked me, you have asked me more than once, whether you could place your proposition before my father. I did not know the nature of the proposition. As it stands, I decline it. Had it stood otherwise I in all probability should have refused it. Not because you have nothing,—if I had loved you I should not have considered that,—but because you had not the manliness to tell me the truth and risk yourself from that stand-point alone. We love, in that land of ours you so little understand, the men who lay down their lives to save them ultimately. The men who save their lives temporarily, only to lose them in the end, as we consider it, American girls seldom love for long."

Sometimes out of the dead level of the commonplace there springs to life a little flower of a familiar aspect. We gaze at it wonderingly, with astonished, enraptured eyes. Happy are those of us who have plucked it in the morning of our days to wear it in our bosoms for all time, cherishing, with its soft pressure against our hearts, memories as of primroses and hawthorn in the spring-time. If we have not plucked it and let it dwell with us, its downy head like the winsome pleading of a little child softening the edges of our griefs, one day when we are worn and old it lifts itself again out of the marsh of our misdeeds and confronts us when we least expect it. This time, when it makes its beauty evident, with a choking, unquenchable pain which tears at our heart-strings like inevitable loss, we recognize, too late, that the time

has passed during which we might have culled it worthily and worn it openly.

Perhaps such a feeling came to life in de Lacaze's soul, that soul so sordid with its owner's mistranslation of life as to have forgotten for years that such a characteristic as personal probity existed. Perhaps not. The judge, as he watched his face closely, sternly resentful, thought he saw something flit across it at Priscilla's words which resembled a flicker of acute pain. Then he considered that he had been mistaken. The count rose, and confronted Priscilla.

"I love you, mademoiselle," he said, with his old-fashioned inclination, so odd to American eyes, so correct in French titled circles, misunderstood or otherwise.

"Forgive me," returned Priscilla, gently, "but I do not love you, count."

"There have been women who have learned to love," persisted the count,—“women such as you, mademoiselle.”

Priscilla flushed very suddenly and deeply.

"I cannot," she answered, very low.

"You could not try, mademoiselle?" De Lacaze's little withered countenance was almost wistful now. He experienced no awkwardness in pleading his suit before a roomful of people. It was customary in cases of this sort, he supposed. To Priscilla the situation was not only ludicrous but full of anguish. She saw Stornmouth's face, with its stern mouth and powerful brows, as though through a mist. Desmoulins was pulling his moustache violently. He knew de Lacaze was playing his last card. The transaction had glided from him like quicksilver; the present issue was maddeningly conclusive.

"It is impossible," said Priscilla.

"Why impossible?"

Priscilla shook her head. Then she turned towards her father. "Oh, send him away!" she cried. "It is hard for me—and for him!"

The count drew himself up with a little stiff movement which betrayed a record of military training.

"*Assez*, mademoiselle.—I have lost," he affirmed, curtly, to Desmoulins. Be it said to his credit, he accepted his defeat with no little courage, considering what it involved for him.

"I will hold these papers," remarked Judge Delno, with precision, "against Monsieur Desmoulins until he admits his collusion in them." He pointed to the two letters. "The fine incurred by the commission of the crime they confirm is ten thousand francs," he added, pithily.

Then, quite unexpectedly, he drew a slip of paper from his pocket. "I find upon search," he remarked, blandly, the lids of his eyes unlifted, his suave voice carrying the weight of an ominous calm, its volume increasing as he continued, "that the aforesaid property in Touraine was confiscated some twenty years since by your father's creditors,—also the property in Lombardy; that although what you state is true in regard to the village of Chambourliez in the Vosges, that your grandfather *sold* it for ten million francs, what your aforesaid relative *received* was ten thousand dollars, all told. I am at a loss"—

the judge's voice here took on a quality which his colleagues were wont to dread—"to discover any sum accredited to you at your banker's—where, I have been informed, you do not possess a check-book. At the office where you are employed as reporter I have received this recommendation, or, as Monsieur Desmoulins calls it, *renseignements*: "De Lacaze. Wherewithal? Nil. Income? Nil. Intelligence? Unequal. Ability? Undeniable. Salary, four hundred francs a month." He paused. "At your club," he added, dryly, "your debts are reported to exceed your winnings." There was a fine smile in the judge's eyes as he laid the paper down. "So slim a case had hardly been worth crossing the Atlantic for," he mused. Stormmouth could have conducted the matter without his assistance.

Desmoulins had been moving towards the door. He started as though he had been shot as a man barred his exit,—the man designated as the Rat, Stormmouth's *garçon* from Durand's, with his well-known smooth face and little ferret eyes. Desmoulins recognized him as his direst foe. He it was, he now remembered, before whom he had laid his nefarious proposition as regarded de Lacaze. He recollected at this moment that this man held him by the throat as effectually as those papers of Judge Delno which might encompass his ruin.

Before the occupants of the room could acquire even recognition of the arrival of this last overpowering witness of the two rascals' consternation and visible acknowledgment that the game was up, Desmoulins, with a brief Gallic exclamation which was as salient as it was rife with an awful purpose, had thrown himself against the astonished newcomer and was dragging him frantically through the doorway out on the landing. There he fastened him by the throat against the wall and pummelled him roundly. Then, before Stormmouth or Doxie could come to the Rat's rescue, Desmoulins had seized him bodily in his arms, and had thrown him, with a dull crash, far down the stairs. The Rat had been so suddenly attacked—expectant only of a large remuneration for putting in an appearance upon the scene where, he had been assured by Stormmouth, his presence would be sorely needed—that, taken unawares, he was unprepared to defend himself. When, bruised and shaken, happily with no bones broken, but with his countenance mashed from Gallic exuberance to a mass of pulp, one eye nearly gouged out, his throat encircled by a purple rim, shaking from head to foot, he was gathered up, he stuck his vanquished head forth from the window of the *fiacre* which Stormmouth had hired for him to convey him to the *juge de paix* with Desmoulins (the latter having been handed over to two *sergents de ville* who had opportunely made their appearance at this moment) and gave vent to these memorable words: "Twas he," he said, solemnly, with a knowing wink, mindful of the promised sum for constituting himself a witness, "Desmoulins, of the *Eclair*; et je m'en fiche du reste."

The count had slunk away when Stormmouth returned to the library. Indeed, the room was vacant, with the exception of a slight figure which stood beside the mantel-piece, gravely gazing into the fire,—a little figure in a pink gown, with a pale face and shaking, nervous hands.



"Priscilla," said Stornmouth, "how well, how very well you know what love is! Who taught you?"

"A man," answered the sweet voice, "a man who misunderstood me,"—the voice grew firmer as it continued, as though gathering courage as its owner became strengthened by what the words strung on it contained,—“a man who dared to think——”

"Dared?" Stornmouth quoted, reproachfully.

"Yes, dared," said Priscilla. "You thought," she said, "oh, my dear, my very dear,"—her hands were in Stornmouth's hands by this time, and she was speaking very fast,—“you thought I played fast-and-loose with you,—with you! It was for Constance,—all for Constance. I wished to pull her through.”

"And you sacrificed yourself thus for her?" Stornmouth spoke huskily, in a tone which held no small element of awe and reverence. His hands were clasping her shoulders. Presently one of them crept up to the rounded chin and turned the dearest little face in the world towards the tender, searching eyes that loved it better than life.

"She is so poor," explained Priscilla. "She could not pay her critics. There was no other way. Besides, I wished to teach both you and him a lesson."

"If you love me," whispered Stornmouth, irrelevantly, with pardonable audacity under the circumstances, "you will, of your own accord, teach me something I have longed to know all my life." His brilliant eyes held a compelling, masterful look which made Priscilla tremble.

"Yes?" answered Priscilla; and then she managed to ejaculate, "And what is that?"

"The lesson a woman teaches the man she loves with all her soul when she lays her lips on his and tells him in that kiss she will be his wife."

"Is there no other way?" demanded a remarkably subdued, shaky little girlish voice, dubiously.

"No."

"Well, I don't know that I mind much," whispered Priscilla.

---

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THE Rat exhibited, in the confrontation with his assailant before the *juge de paix*, a memory which made him famous. It held pigeon-holed facts as a honey-comb holds honey. Indeed, he proved himself so valuable an aid in emphasizing Desmoulins' just retribution that he received an offer—as soon as he shook off the coils of French administrative methods—of the position of head detective in a private force which proved itself later to be possessed of rare excellence and undeniable originality in ways and means hitherto undreamed of in the business.

Desmoulins, accused of collusion in many cases of fraud concealed until now, was sent to Mazas for a period of two years. The Rat smiled grimly as he was marched off to prison between two gendarmes.

The exuberance returned to his countenance and the light to his eyes as he administered his own medicine to the individual who had sought for so long to suppress him.

De Lacaze slunk off towards the Midi, having been informed by his employers of the *Figaro* that his services were no longer required.

The affair caused an immense stir in Paris. It was deemed wise that its perpetrators should be forgotten.

For three years Constance Brilla pursued her vocal career. Then she retired from the stage. In those three years she learned how sad a struggle women born to private life assume when they elect to cast in their lot with those ungodly and low-born creatures with whom the foreign stage almost invariably overflows.

Doxie returned to America with his honest heart fired with new zeal now that he had her promise to work upon.

Constance's loneliness was profound. Friends she had none. Jealousy and venom cap-sheafed any possible contingency in that delightful direction. Her fine character, her high standard for art pure and simple, her desire to succeed through merit, proved her direst foes, since unconsciously they assumed for her a superiority which in any other direction she was far from feeling. Her better womanhood only won for her venomous innuendo from her comrades of both genders. For the foreign stage, feverish from incessant contact with scurvy methods and talent strung on a record of viciousness,—a viciousness perhaps acquired or inherited through strangling poverty and imperative association with immorality,—has at present very few instances of indomitable will, coupled with merit spiritual as much as material, having made its way worthily to the fore. It has been proved, it is being proved, it will be proved again and again, that success, the highest, sweetest version of righteous achievement, is practically unattainable in this quarter for young, beautiful, and well-born foreigners, unless through the most awful strife, a strife incomprehensible perhaps, at least unmastered, by on-lookers at home,—a strife which to uninitiated maidenhood is as the blizzard to the hot-house flower,—a strife no less ceaseless nor racking than the strife of the spirit against the flesh.

When Constance turned her face towards home, she experienced none of the regret it might have been supposed would be her portion upon taking such a decision,—a decision to renounce the foot-lights for the fireside, the applause of the multitude for the appreciation of her friends. Rather she rejoiced. For she recognized, sadly enough, that her star would never be in the ascendant in a country where human nature warred against her peace with vile innuendo and inappreciation of her noble battle against deterioration. Her mind encompassed finally the sad conclusion that she was purposely misunderstood. Happily, by that time Stephen Doxie came in search of his wife.

At home at last, where the sound of the threshing-machine made music for her dreams, and the grasshoppers droned out their monotonous song, and the odor of salt and sedge drifted its fragrant freshness through the honeysuckle which sweetened her quiet thoughts, she wrote one day a letter to Mrs. John Stormmouth of New York.

"Stephen says," ran the little missive, "that every note I sing to him is worth its weight in gold. Although he is not the greatest critic in the world, somehow I believe him. By the way, dearie, are there not days when you are glad that we gave up our dreams,—yours of a title, and mine of being a prima donna?"

"Constance, you dear old girl," came the answer, a month later, "how did you ever know I wished to be a countess? John has never even suspected it. Besides, it is all very well for you to be resigned. You *were* a prima donna."

That very night the Stormmouths gave a dinner, a fashionable dinner, with a pink-and-silver background, Hungarians in a small conservatory at the left of the dining-room, several of the season's prettiest *débutantes*, and Mrs. John Stormmouth radiant at the head of the table.

The conversation drifted on to the international marriage question.

"Listen," Priscilla advised, soberly, her hand on the dimpled wrist of a girl at her side, a girl who had turned the heads of half England's noblest sons at the queen's last drawing-room,—a girl with eyes like golden topazes and a head like a stag in its spirited carriage, a brow for a tiara, the world said,—"listen. Don't do it. There will be days, you know, when the atmosphere will be heavy as lead; and your husband won't care to understand."

"But how do you know?"

Priscilla flushed violently. Her eyes caught Stormmouth's. His were guilty of the old twinkle. "Hush," she whispered, fearfully. "I came very near it. He"—indicating her *vis-à-vis*—"never knew how near."

And just at that moment one of John Stormmouth's most observing guests wondered why his host threw back his handsome head and gave vent to a ringing laugh.

THE END.

*THE STATUS OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE.*

**T**HE builders of a new country are of necessity agricultural in their pursuits and tendencies, and the products they wrest from the desolate barrenness of the land give life to new industries that form the business fabric and social sustenance of a nation. In the primeval forests they toil endlessly against unfavorable conditions that either warp and destroy life or develop character and sturdiness; the fields, reclaimed from watery wastes and the wildness of untamed nature, respond sullenly to their repeated efforts, and barely return sufficient crops to pay for all the back-breaking, heart-rending labor; and the very meadow-lands and prairies seem to grudge the pioneers a living, as though they considered them interlopers come to rob them of their pristine virginity. Underneath the broiling summer sun that dries and parches the scanty vegetation that they have nourished into sickly growth, and in the teeth of wintry storms and icy blasts that freeze and congeal the blood of the body, they work out the destiny of a new nation, imparting vigor and determination or weakness and imbecility to future generations, according to whether they conquer their environments or permit themselves to be mastered by them. The conflict extends through many years of desperate discouragement, and the end is not foreseen even by those who die at a ripe old age in the rank and file of the army.

Oh, the bitterness of it all!—the sorrow of toil unrequited, the desperateness of conditions that promise no improvement! And yet through it all there are gleams of hope and pleasure. The discipline of sorrow and labor brings its own recompense. There is happiness in the breast of the veteran soldier fighting relentlessly against odds, conscious of his power, his training, his discipline; and while the battle goes against him he dies with a smile on his grim lips, because deep-seated in his soul there dwells a feeling that all this strife and contention has been for a principle of right. The sturdy pioneer is something of a soldier. Because of his inability to see often even a gleam of sunshine ahead, and because the fierce heat of the encounter is wanting to stimulate and encourage blindly any wavering of the spirit, he has more of the battle to fight than he who clashes fiercely with arms. Like the timber of oak seasoned by the gradual influences of weather and climate, he becomes hardened to surroundings, and yet withal capable of a polish so bright and lustrous that the reason of the discipline is clearly apparent.

In this school of bitterness the American farmer was reared. First, in the pathless forests of New England he received his education from the rough hands of nature, which seemed to hedge in his opportunities for success at every turn, but always leaving some loophole through which the sturdy could escape. Second, on the limitless prairies and among the mountain fastnesses of a Western empire the lesson was repeated. The conditions were not dissimilar. The base of supplies,

measured by the time required to reach it, was just as distant as when an ocean intervened. There was the trackless country, larger and more beautiful, to be reclaimed and brought under subjection; there were the meadow-lands magnified into almost limitless prairies, the mountains and hills that veiled their heads among the clouds, the forests whose depths had never been penetrated, and upland and lowland that teemed with vegetation, but that reluctantly yielded the corn and wheat and fruits of the settlers; in short, there was another New England spread out on a larger pattern and subject to the same laws of an inexorable nature.

The work of conquering these two great agricultural worlds was intrusted to the farmer, and after two centuries of toil the glory of the conquest was realized. The patriots in this silent warfare against nature fell by the wayside, but their blood coursed in the veins of ambitious descendants. The conflict was taken up where they dropped, and through the continuous stream of endeavor we see the flash of genius, the wavering of uncertain and misdirected zeal, the discouragement and bitterness of failure, the silent determination and dogged perseverance of leaders. The story abounds in silent tragedies, of slow death gnawing at the vitals of the spirit and flesh; in comedies, rich, full, and genuine as the very essence of a noble life unfettered by environment; in dramas so thrilling that only the poet is needed to give a new faith to the world; and in epics that contain all the heroism of a nation struggling against all that is little in self, and all that is great and awe-inspiring in the greater world beyond.

But the narrative changes toward the end. To mingle with the descendants of these all-conquering pioneers came the emigrants of an old world,—not the kind that first settled our New England States, but men of a lower stamp, often the scum and outlawed element of dissatisfied and decaying monarchies. They came at a time when the wildernesses were cut down, when the barren fields had been enriched by the labor of four generations, when the rewards of past endeavor and deprivation first began to glimmer upon the horizon. They injected new blood into the youthful nation, new ideas of living, notions of new institutions, and new ideals of existence. They spread out in ever-increasing numbers upon a land opened by the pioneers. They swarmed in the cities,—French, Italians, Germans, Dutch, Celts, Slavs, men of the Latin races and men of the Orient. Agricultural conditions under the control of this mixed multitude were bound to change. Our government and institutions had all they could do to resist the insidious encroachment and to withstand the influence of an element alien and unsympathetic to our life. But what our government succeeded in doing with difficulty agriculture failed to do, and she became distorted, misdirected, perverted.

In order to see clearly the true status of our farming to-day, it is necessary to take into consideration these diverse elements that were injected into our civilization just as our farmers were emerging from the darkness and sorrow of their pioneer life. The emigrants were not wholly an unmixed evil even to our agricultural life. They cheapened labor upon the farm, so that the owner of extensive, well-cultivated

fields found more leisure and opportunities for pleasure. The soil yielded just as much, land was no dearer, taxes were no higher, and the markets were enlarged. There was a short-lived era when the farmers reaped the reward of their ancestors' toil, and when they blessed the coming of the emigrants into the paradise they had hewed out of the wilderness. Wheat was a dollar a bushel, corn eighty and ninety cents, cotton fifteen cents per pound, and labor hire cheaper than ever before in the New World. Necessities of life, and the few luxuries that were gradually growing up in every household, measured by the standard of prices that prevailed when the country was a wilderness, were far lower. The farmer soon ceased to be his own cobbler, for factory shoes could be purchased with the proceeds of the farm; he sold his wool in open market, and exchanged a part of the profits for clothes that were formerly spun at home with an infinite expenditure of labor; he sent his produce to the towns and cities, and for the ready cash he received for it he catered to his growing demands in a way that his "simple fathers" never realized.

The reaction from the stern, severe life of the past worked changes in his nature as deep-rooted as those in his business. Luxuries became necessities; the desire to enjoy more sapped the moral strength of the sturdy workers; the passion for ease and comfort succeeded the love of labor; and the restlessness of dissatisfaction completed the list of signs of early degeneracy. In this state of mind the farmer was not well prepared to meet the agricultural revolution that was about dawning upon his age.

The era of machinery opened. The ingenuity of man placed machinery at the disposal of the farmers, and the products of the fields were tripled and quadrupled, where before they were doubled through the aid of cheap emigrant labor. As in the mechanical and industrial world, machinery developed farm industries so that the busy toilers suddenly found their hours of labor lessened, their prospective profits increased, and their hard condition ameliorated. With cheap labor in the market, and obedient machinery to do the laborious duties, it was easier to cultivate one hundred acres than formerly it had been to cultivate twenty-five. For a season the farmer seemed to have the upper hand of the world. The cities had to be fed, and the streams of emigrants helped to swell the consumptive demand and to lower even more the cost of farm labor.

But what appears as a blessing in one generation too often develops into an evil in the next. Any man with his eyes clearly opened might have prophesied the result. The new machinery quadrupled the yield, but the population, fast as it grew, could not keep pace with such abnormal growth. Many of the emigrants multiplied the ranks of the producers, eager to seize the opportunities that were held forth to the agricultural population, and their labor, added to that of the machinery, helped to swell the grand total yield of the New World's crops. When falling prices denoted the beginning of the change, there were thousands engaged in farming who did not possess a tithe of the energy and intelligence of the pioneer farmers of the new continent. Their methods of robbing the soil brought them a living while prices were high, and



so long as the natural fertility of the land lasted they could exist in comfort. But the revolution came, and left them stranded high and dry. Agriculture, like manufacture and commerce, had finally to adjust itself to the new conditions. It was the last to fall in line, but the fateful day had to come. Machinery had reduced the cost of living necessities by intense competition, and it was unfair to hold up the price of breadstuffs. The merchant and manufacturer had reduced the cost of clothes, shoes, and the luxuries of life for the farmer, so that he could live and dress as never before at a less expenditure of money.

Wheat dropped from a dollar a bushel to seventy-five cents, corn tumbled even lower in proportion, and other products averaged down in their order, with every promise of going to still lower figures. There were chagrin, anxiety, despair, in the rank and file of the agricultural community. The change came like a blow out of the dark, and yet it had heralded its coming. Men threw down their ploughs and abandoned the farms. The sons of sturdy agriculturists were bred in the dissatisfied atmosphere, and with the phrase "farming don't pay" on their lips they started for the towns and cities. In the great West, where rich farm-land could be had for the asking, and where teeming crops flourished without cultivation, the revolution was slower, and for another generation the farmers succeeded in pushing forward. But prices continued to fall, while there was no retraction in living expenses. The children of the sturdy pioneers could not return to the conditions that made farming a success even when all the elements of nature and society seemed against them. The love for the luxuries of our modern civilization could not be suppressed, but the spirit of the industrial age had not infected them, and they failed to adapt themselves to the new conditions.

Herein is the misery of existence. Without adaptation to environments, man is made a sufferer. He looks up at the blue skies and the shining sun, and around at the green fields, but there is no enjoyment in them, for they seem far away from him. He looks backward or forward, and sees the elusive joys just beyond his grasp. He toils aimlessly and blindly, and every effort seems to redound to his injury. In time he learns to remain passive. It is easier to suffer thus than to fight and worry without effect.

We have pioneers in the new agriculture to-day as we had a hundred years ago, men guided with a compass and chart, and they hew with might and main along lines that overcome all difficulties. They are but repeating the conflict of their ancestors. They are conquering their environments. They have not let the era of false prices and booms and the insidious poison of dissatisfaction and discouragement sap their strength and moral belief in the eternal fitness of things. They see a broader lesson in the changes of adversity. Often without hope they labor in their vineyard, but, like the veteran who dies on the battle-field for his country's sake, they do it for the good of mankind, and not altogether for self. Therein is their stay and hope,—their religion.

In the greatest country in the world for natural wealth, why should

agriculture be at such a low ebb that none can find a decent living? Have the gods in some mysterious way reversed the order of things, and made happiness and content to hover over the lowly dwellings of those who till the fields in barren, overcrowded lands, where life is made up of one unending round of toil, where nutritious, attractive foods are barely tasted once a week, and where fine dresses and travel are undreamed-of luxuries? Are the "green fields" of the old song so far away after all,—in France, England, Denmark, Germany, Norway, or possibly Japan and China? Have we suddenly returned to the lowest end of the scale again, and must we toilsomely climb up to our former high notch? Or have we become out of joint with the times? have we cultivated our tastes and expensive habits without improving our powers of workmanship?

We have those among us who preach a lesson of discontent, and tell us that our agriculture is far behind that of almost any other country. They picture the condition of continental Europe, and proclaim boldly that the Dane, the German, the Englishman, and the Frenchman gather more comfort and actual profit from tilling their few acres of soil than the American farmer does from his hundreds of acres. The Danish butter-makers have gained a world-wide reputation for their products, the French and Swiss cheese-manufacturers have become important factors in every market in civilization, and the fruit-growers of the Mediterranean send their goods by the ship-load even into our own fair fruit-producing land. It is easier to picture the success and happiness of these far-away green fields than to erect a Utopia at our very doors. It would require the elimination of the imagination from the picture to bring these scenes down to the true prosaic plane of comparison with our own conditions. There is nothing idyllic on a farm where the toil seems long, the profits small, and discontent is insidiously eating out the life and the happiness of the owner. The eyes are blinded to everything above a low, narrow horizon.

The comparison between American agriculture and that of almost any other country will invariably be found in favor of the former. The Danish butter-maker and the Swiss and French cheese-manufacturers have truly excelled in their calling through years of hard experience, but from their own testimony they are too poor to eat any of their delicious products. Every pound of fine butter and every cake of good cheese made in their dairies must be sold in Paris or London, and if the farmers have any butter or cheese at all it must be made from the worthless refuse that is left. They cannot afford to eat their own products.

The mushroom-growers of France, and the fruit-farmers of continental Europe, harvest their products with an infinite amount of labor, but they dare not look with greedy eyes upon the things they handle. For them the taste of such luxuries is denied. Their simple diet cannot include anything that the wealthy of the cities will pay a fair price for. They must deny themselves in order to obtain the necessities of life. Their profits enable them to live, but it is a living more narrow and cramped than that of our Puritan farmers. They have less intel-

ligence, less appreciation, and less sturdy independence than our forefathers who hewed their farms out of the wilderness. They live upon the coarsest fare, dress in the cheapest and meanest clothes, and economize in everything that makes life so dear to the average American. Their homes are often the exemplification of humbleness,—bare walls, scanty furniture, hard stools and beds, with no ornaments, literature, or luxuries to relieve the monotony of existence.

Such conditions, true of nine-tenths of the farmers of continental Europe,—the English agricultural classes being a little better situated, but those of China and Japan much worse,—are hardly comparable with those of the poorest pioneers in the most isolated sections of the United States. The American farmer has an abundance of the best foods that suitable soil and climate can produce,—a variety that would astound and excite the greed of a European farmer. He does not regulate his life upon the policy of sending the best to market and retaining only the refuse for home consumption. His land raises enough to supply his own table with the very best, and he eats the fat of the land before he sends his produce away. He is well fed, well clothed, well housed, and frequently supplied with many of the actual luxuries of life. Luxuries are purely relative in their meaning, and what the American farmer of to-day would consider necessities his ancestors would certainly have classed as luxuries, as would to-day his brother laborers across the seas. These truths are so trite that they do not need emphasizing or elaboration.

But after he is fed and clothed and housed as no farmers ever were before, the agricultural toiler demands a profit commensurate with the income of the business-man, the merchant, the lawyer, the doctor, or the statesman. In this demand he is justified to an extent, but it depends upon his own exertions and intelligence, and not upon governmental regulation of social conditions. That it is possible for him to achieve this reward can be proved by ten thousand examples. The status of our agriculture even in hard times such as we have been passing through is so much higher than ever before in the history of our country that the farmer properly equipped for his work can make a good living, and something over and above his expenses. Our agricultural conditions are suitable for accomplishing this, but the laborers in the vineyard are often unworthy of their hire. Many are utterly incompetent for their task, by training, by intelligence, and by inheritance. They have not the sturdy energy and independence of our early settlers; they are no better fitted for their calling than they would have been for carving an agricultural domain out of a wilderness of woods.

Not all are such. There are thousands in whose blood the principles of the Puritans still dominate, and there are tens of thousands of sturdy emigrants who inwardly bless Providence for shifting the scenes of their labors to a land so superior to their own. But among them are mixed the incompetent, the discontented, the unstable, the ignorant, and the dangerous classes. In their blood the poisoned seeds of restlessness dwell, and these beget hatred and revolution. It is the unlettered scum of Europe rising to the surface at last, and, distasteful as it

may be to us, the vicious element of our degenerates, who have failed to keep abreast of the moral and industrial improvements of the age. The rank and file of our agriculturists are poisoned and polluted with these vicious classes, as well as the rank and file of the industrial world. It took them longer to make themselves felt in the former than in the latter, for there was a sturdier population, a stronger moral and rock-ribbed class of citizens, dwelling in the country than in the cities.

The incompetent agriculturists are a drag upon the progressive element, and they are the loudest in their denunciations of a system of farming that stands foremost in the world. They bring discredit upon the calling of all. The general fall in all agricultural prices has been heavy, and it has borne down cruelly upon many not prepared for it. But no one has succeeded in showing that it has been larger in proportion to the fall in prices in nearly all other branches of business. It is difficult to say what is an equitable ratio between the price of wheat and corn and clothes and shoes. It may be that one has temporarily dropped lower than it should, but if so the inevitable laws of supply and demand will equalize them in time. In any transition period of an industry prices are apt to be uncertain, irregular, and often unjust. Agriculture is passing through this period now because the vast majority have not yet accustomed themselves to the conditions of the new agriculture. They are not scientific farmers; they are plodders too often, or naturally ignorant or slothful workmen.

The new farming is scientific at its foundation. The State Experiment Stations, the Department of Agriculture, and the farm periodicals emphasize this, and repeat it over and over again. The true way not to succeed in agriculture is to refuse to listen to the story told by these various organs. The advent of machinery has quadrupled the yield and reduced prices, but it has lessened the cost of cultivation. Improved seeds and methods of tillage have performed like results. The farmer who avails himself of none must be unsuccessful. He cannot raise a bushel of wheat by the old processes, and sell it at present-day prices, without paying the purchaser for taking it off his hands. If he cannot be made to understand this, it is useless to argue with him that it is his fault, and not that of the conditions of the times.

The new farming has its superstructure built upon strict business principles that obtain in the world of general commerce and industry. It is just as much a question of profit and loss with the farmer as it is with the merchant. How much can he make out of one acre, five acres, one hundred acres? He must be a seller as well as a producer. The man who operates a factory spends as much time in finding good markets for his articles as he does in manufacturing them. When the market is glutted he economizes in expenses, and when prices fall he endeavors to produce his commodities at less cost. Every new invention is likely to make his machinery and plant obsolete, and he must be prepared for such a contingency. Other articles superior to his may crowd him to the wall, and there is only one of two alternatives,—failure, or a change in his system which will enable him to improve the quality and nature of his goods.

In an industrial age like this there is no reason why agriculture should be exempt from the same laws. And it is not. That is why so many fail. They have not been trained to their vocation. They are incompetent to avail themselves of conditions that can be made to produce success. They see neither the scientific nor the business end of farming. They drift into it from other occupations, in which they more than likely failed, and expect to find a comfortable living. Their disappointment is naturally acute, and they conclude that what they cannot do other men must likewise fail in accomplishing. The disaster adds another member to the discontented. Or it may be that inherited qualities of degeneracy handicap them in the struggle. They cannot get out of the old ruts; they are doomed to cling to past methods and obsolete systems.

Thus the history of our agriculture is written plainly, and it is read aright by those who have the intelligence to grasp the meaning of the changes and revolutions. The earnest, intelligent, successful farmers of the country may see conditions confronting them that are not all they could wish, but clear thinking and due action in good times will still make them happy and satisfied men. They renew their youth by renewing their methods. They see the portentous breakers ahead, and they prepare to meet them. They educate and discipline their souls for the conflict, as their forefathers did in the wilderness of New England, and later on the frontiers of the great West. Their reward is greater in this life than was ever bestowed upon their ancestors, but it will be larger, sweeter, and fuller for future generations if they but guide and educate the energies of their children in the way that they should go. This will be an inheritance richer and more satisfying than broad acres of fertile fields and barns overflowing with grain and fruits.

*George Ethelbert Walsh.*

---

### PEARL-SEEKING.

THE history of pearl-seeking has about it so much of the glamour of romance and possible gain that the difficulties and risks of the quest are well-nigh forgotten. Men love excitement and quick fortune, and they love a pursuit that entails much danger and much knowledge of men and elements. Long before the Roman conquest, men were hazarding the dangers of newly discovered rivers in search of the elusive gems; and one of the prime reasons for undertaking the expedition to Great Britain was to obtain the fair "congealed dew-drops pierced by sunbeams" which poets and philosophers in all ages have made the emblems of purity and worth, and which the Roman women so much coveted. There is scarcely a sacred literature in existence in which pearls do not bear reverent meaning, and no nation where place and favor have not been bought by the beautiful, lustrous products of the sea.

But although most of the seas and rivers of the world have been



tested, and many of them have yielded pearls in limited quantities, there are few localities where fisheries have been prosecuted on a large scale for the purpose of commerce. The shores of Australia and of the Pacific islands are favorite grounds, as are the coral banks of Ceylon and the Persian Gulf. The ancient pearl-seekers obtained their gems almost entirely from India and the Persian Gulf, and the writings of the earliest travellers allude to the fisheries in the Gulf of Manaar, still the most important in that part of the world. One writer of the twelfth century refers to eight thousand boats being engaged there in one season.

Along the southern extremity of the Red Sea pearl-fishing is a flourishing industry, and until within a few years the annual proceeds of the banks amounted to fifty thousand dollars or more. Of late, however, there has been a falling off in the yield, and native divers account for the decrease by referring to the old superstition of a "drop of rain in the oyster's mouth," and say that as but little rain has fallen in that region for several years, there are few pearls. But perhaps a more logical reason might be found in the agitation of the water caused by an increased number of coasting steamers. The pearl-oyster does not like disturbance, and is a lover of quiet waters and secluded banks.

Pearl-fishing in the Red Sea is prosecuted on both the African and Arabian sides, between the small barren islands, where the water is but a few fathoms deep. Occasionally the Turkish government attempts to control the industry on the Arabian side, but the natives are alert and usually evade all interference. They are faithful workers during the three months of their harvest time, but during the enforced idleness of the other nine months often become so indebted to the native merchants for subsistence as to be obliged to sell their output at whatever price they can get. It is said that but a very small proportion of the pearl-harvest finds its way to the outside world. The natives of India and Arabia are inordinately fond of them; the women wear pearl-studded bracelets and anklets, and a lavish display of pearls on their fingers and in their ears and noses. Among the wealthy, hoarded collections of pearls take the place of the government bonds of their cousin capitalists across the sea. Most of the great Indian merchants reside at Bombay, and for this reason Bombay has become the principal pearl-market of that part of the world.

As yet the origin of pearls is a matter of mere speculation. The old theory that they were "congealed dew-drops pierced by sunbeams" was supported by naturalists as late as 1684, and is evidenced in a Venetian medal bearing an open oyster-shell receiving drops of rain, with the motto, "By the divine dew." Later conchologists, however, contend that the pearl-nucleus may be some minute particle, as a grain of sand, or the frustule of a diatom, or a tiny parasite, or perhaps one of the ova of the pearl-oyster itself. This particle or foreign body is gradually surrounded by thin layers of nacre until it is completely encysted and the pearl formed. The consecutive layers may vary in brightness and color, and a defect may be caused by contact with another foreign substance, thus changing the value with each new



layer and sometimes causing a "lively kernel" or "seed" to be enclosed in an apparently poor pearl.

In seeking the "elusive gems," divers go down alternately, so that when some come up others are ready to descend. This gives the exhausted an opportunity to recuperate for a fresh plunge. To assist him in the descent it is customary for the diver to attach a stone to a rope. When ready to go down, he holds the rope firmly with the toes of his right foot, and grasps a net-work bag with those of his left; then, seizing the main rope with his right hand, and holding his nostrils closed with his left, he jumps into the water. The weight of the stone carries him down rapidly, and during the half-minute or so that he remains on the bottom he collects as many oysters as possible in the bag, using both his fingers and his toes in the work. From long practice he is able to do this with wonderful swiftness and dexterity. When the bag is full, or he becomes exhausted, the signal to be drawn up is given by pulling the rope.

Notwithstanding the glamour of romance which surrounds it, the life of an ordinary diver is hard and unenviable. It is one of trying exposure and danger, not only from the natural causes of exhaustion and disease, but from the constant menace of sharks and other sea-monsters. Sometimes cholera breaks out among the divers, and then an entire fishery is abandoned by the panic-stricken crews, the boats flying in every direction; sometimes a man-eating shark finds his way into the fleet and remains there, defying pursuit or capture, and there is a general suspension of business until he is destroyed; and sometimes the grounds "give out" temporarily, for some unknown reason, and the fleet is obliged to move on in search of new banks or fields.

The beds of pearl-producing mollusks are elusive and chimerical in value. Some of them have been profitably worked for centuries, while others scarcely became famous before they began to depreciate and vanish from the public mind. The most important fishery of the twelfth century is still profitably worked by the Madras government, and during the last hundred years has yielded upwards of two million rupees; but there are others, equally famous in ancient history, whose location even is mythical. It requires about four years for the average pearl-producing mollusk to mature, and the industry is rendered precarious by the habit which the oysters have of using their locomotive powers to migrate to more favorable situations.

In government fisheries the mollusks are usually divided into four heaps; one of these heaps is for the diver, while the other three are sold for the government to the highest bidder. The oysters are generally sold unopened, so the transaction takes more the form of a lottery than of a commercial exchange.

During the process of extracting the pearls much care has to be taken to prevent robbery. The natives do not consider stealing a crime unless discovered: so, as a safeguard against their thievish propensities, the men engaged in washing the oysters are allowed but scant clothing, and the prevailing habit of betel-chewing is strictly prohibited among them. But, in spite of all precaution, it is not uncommon for a native to slip a rare pearl into his mouth, and even to swallow it.

Pearls are sorted by being passed through brass sieves of twenty, thirty, fifty, eighty, one hundred, two hundred, four hundred, eight hundred, and one thousand holes, and are afterwards classified according to shape and lustre. An "ani" is perfect in lustre and sphericity, while an "anatar" fails somewhat in one of these attributes; "masanku" is imperfect, failing in both points, especially in brilliancy of color; "kallipu" fails still more in both points; "kural" is a double pearl; "pisal," misshapen or clustered; "madanku," folded or bent pearls; and "tul," small pearls of the eight hundred or one thousand class. In determining value, size is of much less importance than purity and clearness.

In the Persian Gulf the divers have a curious way of opening the season. They depend implicitly upon the shark-conjurors, and will not descend without their presence. To meet this difficulty, the government is obliged to hire the charmers to divert the attention of the sharks from the fleet. As the season approaches, vast numbers of natives gather along the shore and erect huts and tents and bazaars. At the opportune moment—usually at midnight, so as to reach the oyster-banks at sunrise—the fleet, to the number of eighty or a hundred boats, puts out to sea. Each of these boats carries two divers, a steersman, and a shark-charmer, and is manned by eight or ten rowers. Other conjurers remain on shore, twisting their bodies and mumbling incantations to divert the sharks. In case a man-eater is perverse enough to disregard the charm and attack a diver, an alarm is given, and no other diver will descend that day. The power of the conjurer is believed to be hereditary, and the efficacy of his incantations to be wholly independent of his religious faith.

In the early days of pearl-fishing it was customary to pick up the oysters at low tide on the reefs; but as this supply became exhausted, small boats and "dingies" were used, the divers descending into one or two fathoms of water wherever they could see the shells. Later, as these shallow waters in turn became exhausted, the small boats were followed by cutters and schooners, with from three to six dingies each, and working almost out of sight of land. In the dingy, a man stands on the after-thwart with an oar over the stern, and sculls against the tide. The divers all go down together, and while they are below the boat must be sculled against the wind, so that they may come up near it. As they become exhausted, the men swim up and climb in to rest, each man stowing his shells separately.

Most of the pearl supply of the world comes from the old countries. Pearl-banks extend from the Gulf of Darien to the Gulf of California, generally at too great depths, however, to be reached by ordinary methods. Fresh-water pearls have also been occasionally found in the Miami, in a few of the New England rivers, and in the districts bordering on the lower St. Lawrence. London is the great pearl-market of the world, importing annually three million dollars' worth from Bombay, three hundred thousand dollars' worth from Australia, and two hundred thousand dollars' worth from other direct sources of supply.

*Frank H. Sweet.*

## AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE falling dusk quenched the fury of the battle. The cannon glimmered but feebly on the dim horizon like the sputter of a dying fire. The shouts of combatants were unheard, and Dave Joyce concluded that the fighting was over for that day at least. In his soul he was glad of it.

"Pardner," he said to the wounded man, "the battle has passed on an' left us here like a canoe stuck on a sand-bank. I think the fightin' is over, but if it ain't we're out of it anyhow, an' I don't know any law why we shouldn't make ourselves as comf'table as things will allow."

"If there's anythin' done," said the wounded man, "you'll have to do it, for I can't walk, an' I can't move, except when there's a bush for me to grab hold of and pull myself along by."

"That's mighty bad," said Joyce, sympathetically. "Where did you say that bullet took you?"

"I got it in my right leg here," the other replied, "an' I think it broke the bone. Leastways the leg ain't any more use to me than if it was dead, though it hurts like tarnation sometimes. I guess it'll be weeks before I walk again."

"Maybe I could do somethin' for you," said Joyce, "if there was a little more light. I guess I'll take a look, anyhow. I haven't been two years in the army not to know anythin' about bullet-wounds."

He bent down and with his pocket-knife cut away a patch of the faded blue cloth from the wounded man's leg.

"I guess I'd better not fool with that," he said, looking critically at the wound. "The bullet's gone all the way through, but the blood's clotted up so thick over the places that the bleedin' has stopped. You won't die if you don't move too much an' start that wound to bleedin' again."

"That's consolin'," said the wounded man; "but, since I can't move, I don't know what's to become of me but to lay here on the field an' die anyway."

"Don't you fret," said Joyce, cheerfully. "I'll take care of you. You're Fed. an' I'm Confed., but you're hurt an' I ain't, an' if the case was the other way I'd expect you to do as much for me. Besides, I've lost my regiment in the shuffle, and the chances are if I tried to find it again to-night I'd run right into the middle of the Yankee army, and that would mean Camp Chase for your humble servant, which is a bunk he ain't covetin' very bad just now. So I guess it'll be the safe as well as the right thing for me to do to stick by you. Jerusalem! listen to that! Just hear them crickets chirpin', will you!"

There was a blaze of light in the west, followed by a crash which seemed to roll around the horizon and set all the trees of the forest to trembling. When the echoes were lost beyond the hills the silence became heavy and portentous. The night was hot and sticky, and the

powdery vapor that still hung over the field crept into Joyce's throat and made him cough for breath.

"Thunderation!" he said at length, still looking in the direction in which the light had blazed up. "I guess at least a dozen of the big cannon must have been fired at once then. Can't some fellows get enough fightin' in the daytime, without pluggin' away in the night-time too? Now I come of fightin' stock myself,—I'm from Kentucky, —but twelve hours out of the twenty-four always 'peared to me to be enough for that sort of thing. Besides, it's so infernal hot to-night, too."

"It was hotter than this for me awhile ago," said the wounded man.

"So it was, so it was," said Joyce, apologetically, "an' I mustn't forget you, either. Let 'em fight over there if they want to, an' if they're big enough fools to spile a night that way when they might be restin'. What you need just now is water. I think there's a spring runnin' out of the side of that hill there. If you'll listen you'll hear it tricklin' away, so cool and refreshin' like. I guess it was tricklin' that same way, just as calm an' peaceful as Sunday mornin', while the battle was goin' on round here. Don't you feel as if a little water would help you mightily, pardner?"

"'Twould so," said the wounded man. "I'm burnin' up inside, an' if you'd get me a big drink of it I'd think you were mighty nigh good enough to be one of the twelve apostles."

"It's easy enough for me to do it," said Joyce. "I'll be back in a minute."

He took off his big slouch hat and walked toward the source of the trickling sound. From beneath an overhanging rock in the side of the hill near by a tiny stream of water flowed. After a fall of five feet it plunged into a little basin which it had hollowed out for itself in the rock, and formed a deep and cool little pool. Around the edge of the pool the tender green grass grew. The overflow from it wandered away in a little rill through the woods.

"Thunder, but ain't this purty?" exclaimed Joyce, forgetting that the wounded man was out of hearing. "It's just like our spring-house back in old Kentuck. I've put our butter-crocks an' milk-buckets a hundred times to cool in our pool when I was a boy. Wish I had some of them things now!"

The stirring of peaceful memories caused Joyce to linger a little, in forgetfulness of the wounded man. It was cool in the shadow of the hill, and the gay little stream tinkled merrily in his ears. He would have liked to remain there, but he pulled himself together with an impatient jerk, filled the crown of his hat with the limpid water, and started back to the relief of the wounded man.

He followed the channel of the stream for a little way, and as he turned to step across it he noticed the increasing depth of its waters.

"It's dammed up," he muttered. "I wonder what's done that."

Then he started back shuddering and spilled half the water from his hat, for he had almost stepped on the body of a man that had fallen across the channel of the poor little rivulet, checking the flow of its waters and deepening the stream.

The body lay face downward, and Joyce could not see the wound that had caused death. But as he stooped down he saw again the broad red flash in the west, and heard the heavy crash of the cannon.

"Will them cannon always be hungry?" he muttered. "But I guess I must give this poor little stream which 'ain't done no harm to anybody the right of way again."

He stooped and pulled the body to one side. With a thankful rush and gurgle the waters of the recent pool sped on in their natural channel, and Joyce returned to the fountain-head to fill his hat again.

He found the wounded man waiting with patience.

"I was gone longer than I ought to have been. Did you think I had left you, pardner?" asked Joyce.

"No," said the man. "I didn't believe you'd play that kind of a trick on me."

"An' so I haven't," said Joyce, "an' for your faith in me I've brought you a hatful of the nicest an' freshest an' coolest water you ever put your lips to in all your born days. Raise your head up, there, an' drink."

The wounded man drank and drank, and then when the hat was emptied he laid his head back in the grass and sighed as if he were in heaven.

"I must say that you 'pear to like water, pardner," said Joyce.

"Like it?" said the wounded man. "Wait till you've been wounded, an' then you'll know what it is to want water. Why, till you brought it I felt as if my inside was full of hot coals, an' I'd burn all up if I didn't get something mighty quick to put the fire out."

"Then I reckon I've stopped a whole conflagration," said Joyce, "an' with mighty little trouble to myself, too. But I don't wonder that you get thirsty on a night like this. Thunderation, but ain't it clammy!"

He sat down on a fallen tree and drew his coat-sleeve across his brow. Then he held up the sleeve: it was wet with sweat. There was no wind. The night had brought no coolness. The thick and heavy atmosphere hung close to the earth and coiled around and embraced everything. Through it came the faint gunpowdery vapor that crept into the throats and nostrils of the two men.

"I wish I was at home sleepin' on the hall floor," said Joyce. "I'll bet it would be cool there."

The wounded man made no answer, but turned his face up to the sky and drew in great mouthfuls of the warm air.

"Them tarnation fools over yonder 'pear to have their dander up yet," said Joyce, pointing to the west, where the alternate flashing and rumbling showed that the battle still lingered. "I thought the battle was over long ago, but I guess it ain't. I've knowed some all-fired fools in my time, but the fellows that would keep on fightin' on a hot night like this must be the all-firedest."

Then the two lay quite still for a while, watching the uneasy rising and falling of the night battle. Had they not known so much of war, they might have persuaded themselves that the flashes they saw were

flashes of heat-lightning and the rumbling but the rumbling of summer thunder. But they knew better. They knew it was men and not the elements that fought.

"It's mighty curious," said Joyce, "how the sand's all gone out of me for the time. To-day I felt as if I could whip the whole Yankee army all by myself. To-night I don't want to fight anythin'. I'm as peaceful in temper as a little lamb friskin' about in our old field at home. I hope that there fightin' won't come our way; at least not to-night. How are you feelin', pardner?"

"Pretty well for a wounded man," replied the other; "but I'd like to have some more water."

"Then I'm the man to get it for you," said Joyce, springing up. "An' I'm goin' to see if I can't get somethin' to eat, too, for my innards are cryin' cupboard mighty loud. There's dead men layin' aroun' here, an' there may be somethin' in their haversacks. I hate to rob the dead, but if they've got grub we need it more'n they do."

He returned with another hatful of water, which the wounded man drank eagerly, gratefully. Then he went back and searched in the grass and bushes for the fallen. Presently he came in great glee, and triumphantly held up two haversacks.

"Luck, pardner!" he exclaimed. "Great luck! Bully luck! One of these I got off a dead Fed. and t'other off a dead Confed., and both must have been boss foragers, for in one haversack there's a roast chicken an' in t'other there's half a b'iled ham, an' in both there's plenty of bread. I haven't had such luck before in six months. You're a Yank, pardner, and a Northerner, an' maybe you don't know much about the vanities of roast chicken an' cold b'iled ham. But it's time you did know. I've come from the field at home when I'd been ploughin' all day, an' my appetite was as sharp as a razor an' as big as our barn. I'd put up old Pete, our black mule that I'd been ploughin' with, an' feed him; then I'd go to the house an' kinder loosen my waist-ban', an' mother would say to me, 'Come in the kitchen, Dave; your supper's ready for you.' Say, pardner, you ought to see me then. There'd be a pitcher of cold buttermilk from the spring-house, and one dish of roast chicken an' another of cold ham, an' all for me, too. An' say, pardner, I can taste that ham now. When you eat one piece you want another, an' then another, an' you keep on till there ain't any left on the dish, an' then you lean back in your chair an' wish that when you come to die you'd feel as happy as you do then. Pardner, I wish them times was back again."

"I wish so too," said the wounded man.

"We can't have 'em back, at least not now," said Joyce, cheerily, "but we can make-believe, an' it'll be mighty good make-believe, too, for we've got the ham an' the chicken, an' we can get cold water to take the place of cold milk. I guess you can use your arms all right: so you can spread this ham an' chicken out on the grass, an' I'll see if I can't fin' a canteen to keep the water in. Say, pardner, we'll have a banquet, you an' me, that's what we'll have."

The stalwart young fellow, full of boyish delight at the idea that the thought of home had suggested to him, swung off in search of the



canteen. He found not one alone, but two. Then he returned clanking them together to indicate his success. As he came up he called out, in his hearty voice,—

"Pardner, is the supper-table ready? Have you got the knives an' forks? You needn't min' about the napkins. I guess we can get along without 'em just this once."

"All ready," said the wounded man; "an' I guess I can keep you company at this ham an' chicken an' bread, for I'm gettin' a mighty sharp edge on my appetite too."

"So much the better," said Joyce. "There's plenty for both, an' it wouldn't be good manners for me to eat by myself."

He sat down on the grass in front of the improvised repast, and placed one canteen beside the wounded man and the other beside himself.

"Now, pardner," he said, "we'll drink to each other's health, an' then we'll charge the ham an' chicken with more vim than either of us ever charged a breastwork."

They drank from the canteens, and then they made onslaught upon the provisions. Joyce ate for a while in deep and silent content, forgetting the heat and the battle which still lowered in the west. But presently, when his appetite was dulled, he remembered the cannonade.

"There they go again!" he said. "Boom! Boom! Boom! Won't them fellows ever get enough? I thought I was hungry, but the cannon over there 'pear to be hungrier. I suppose there ain't men enough in all this country to stop up their iron throats. But bang away! They don't bother us: do they, pardner? They can't spile this supper, for all their boomin' an' flashin'."

The wounded man bowed assent and took another piece of the ham.

Joyce leaned back on the grass, held up a chicken leg in his hand, and looked contemplatively at it.

"Ain't it funny, pardner," he said, "that you, a Tommy Yank, an' me, a Johnny Reb, are sittin' here, eatin' grub together, as friendly as two brothers, when we ought to be killin' each other? I don't know what Jeff Davis an' old Abe Lincoln will say about it when they hear of the way you an' me are doin'."

The wounded man laughed.

"You can say that I was your prisoner," he said, "when they summon you before the court-martial. An' so I am, if you choose to make me. I can't resist."

"I'm thinkin' more about gettin' back safe to our army than makin' prisoners," said Joyce, as he flung the chicken bone, now bare, into the bushes.

"That may be hard to do," said the wounded man; "for neither you nor me can tell which way the armies will go. Listen to that boomin'! Wasn't it louder than before? That fightin' must be movin' round nearer to us."

"Let it move," said Joyce. "I tell you I've had enough of fightin' for one day. That battle can take care of itself. I won't let it bother me. I don't want to shoot anybody."

"Is that the way you feel when you go into battle?" asked the wounded man.

"I can't say exactly," replied Joyce. "Of course when I go out in a charge with my regiment I want to beat the other fellows, but I don't hate 'em, no, not a bit. I've got nothin' against the Yanks. I've knowed some of 'em that was mighty good fellows. There ain't any of 'em that I want to kill. No, I'll take that back; there is one, just one, a bloody villain that I'd like to draw a bead on an' send a bullet through his skulkin' body."

"Who is that?" asked the wounded man; "an' why do you make an exception of him?"

Joyce remained silent for a moment or two and drew a long blade of grass restlessly through his fingers.

"It's not a pleasant story," he said, at last, "an' it hurts me now to tell it, but I made you ask the question, an' I guess I might as well tell you, 'cause I feel friendly toward you, pardner, bein' as we are together in distress, like two Robinson Crusoes, so to speak."

The wounded man settled himself in the grass like one who is going to listen comfortably to a story.

"It's just a yarn of the Kentuck hills," said Joyce, "an' a bad enough one, too. We're a good sort of people up there, but we're hot-blooded, an' when we get into trouble, as we sometimes do, kinfolks stan' together. I guess you're from Maine, or York State, or somewhere away up North, an' you can't understand us. But it's just as I say. Sometimes two men up in our hills fight, an' one kills the other. Then the dead man's brothers, and sons if he's got any old enough, an' cousins, an' so on, take up their guns an' go huntin' for the man that killed him. An' the livin' man's brothers an' sons an' cousins an' so on take up their guns an' come out to help him. An' there you've got your feud, an' there's no tellin' how many years it'll run on, an' how many people will get killed in it.—Thunderation, but wasn't them cannon loud that time! The battle is movin' round toward us sure!"

Joyce listened a moment, but heard nothing more except the echoes.

"Our family got into one of them feuds," he said. "It was the Joyces and the Ryders. I'm Dave Joyce, the son of Henry Joyce. I don't remember how the feud started; about nothin' much, I guess; but it was a red-hot one, I can tell you, pardner. It was fought fair for a long time, but at last Bill Ryder shot father from ambush and killed him. Father hadn't had much to do with the feud, either; he didn't like that sort of thing,—didn't think it was right. I said right then that if I ever found the chance when I got big enough I'd kill Bill Ryder."

"Did you get the chance?" asked the wounded man.

"No," replied Joyce. "Country got too hot for Ryder, and he went away. He came back after a while, an' I was big enough to go gunnin' for him then, but the war broke out, an' off he went into the Union army before I could get a chance to draw a bead on him. I ain't heard of him since. Maybe he's been killed in battle an' his bones are bleachin' somewhere in the woods."

"Most likely," said the wounded man.

"There's no tellin'," said Joyce. "Still, some day when we're comin' up against the Yanks face to face I may see him before me, an' then I'll

hold my gun steady an' shoot straight at him, instead of whoopin' like mad an' firin' lickety-split into the crowd, aimin' at nothin', as I generally do."

"It's a sad story, very sad for you," said the wounded man.

"Yes," said Joyce. "You don't have such things as feuds up North, do you?"

"No," replied the other, "an' we're well off without 'em. Hark, there's the cannon again!"

"Yes, an' they keep creepin' round toward us with their infernal racket," said Joyce. "Cannon love to chaw up people an' then brag about it. But if them fellows are bent on fightin' all night I guess we'll have to give 'em room for it. What do you say to movin'? I've eat all I want, an' I guess you have too, an' we can take what's left with us."

"I don't know," said the wounded man. "My leg's painin' me a good deal, an' the grass is soft an' long here where I'm layin'. It makes a good bed, an' maybe I'd better stay where I am."

"I think not," said Joyce, decidedly. "That night fight's still swingin' down on us, an' if we stay too long them cannon'll feed on us too. We'd better move, pardner. Let me take a look at your wound. It's gettin' lighter, an' I can see better now. The moon's up, an' she's shinin' for all she's worth through them trees. Besides, them cannon-flashes help. Raise up your head, pardner, an' we'll take a look at your wound together."

"I don't think you can do any good," said the wounded man. "It would be better not to disturb it."

"But we must be movin', pardner," said Joyce, a little impatiently. "See, the fight's warmin' up, an' it's still creepin' down on us. Seems to me I can almost hear the tramp of the men an' the rollin' of the cannon-wheels. Jerusalem! what a blaze that was! I say, it's time for us to be goin'. If we stay here we're likely to be ground to death under the cannon-wheels, if we ain't shot first. Just let me get a grip under your shoulders, pardner, an' I'll take you out of this."

The cannon flamed up again, and the deep thunder filled all the night.

"Listen how them old iron throats are growlin' an' mutterin'," said Joyce; "an' they're sayin' it's time for us to be travellin'."

"I believe," said the wounded man, "that I would rather stay where I am an' take my chances. If I move I'm afraid I'll break open my wound. Besides, I think you're mistaken. It seems to me that the fight's passin' round to the right of us."

"Passin' to the right of us nothin'," said Joyce. "It's comin' straight this way, with no more respect for our feelin's than if you an' me was a couple of field-mice."

The wounded man made no answer.

"Do you think, pardner," asked Joyce, slight offence showing in his voice, "that the Yanks may come this way an' pick you up an' then you won't be a prisoner? Is that your game?"

As his companion made no answer, Joyce continued,—

"You don't think, pardner, that I want to hold you a prisoner, do

you? an' you a wounded man, too, that I picked up on the battle-field and that I've eat and drank with? Why, that ain't my style."

He waited for an answer, and as none came he was seized with a sudden alarm.

"You ain't dead, pardner?" he cried. "Jerusalem! what if he's died while I've been standin' here talkin' an' wastin' time!"

He bent over to take a look at the other's face, but the wounded man, with a sudden and convulsive movement, writhed away from him and struck at him with his open hand.

"Keep away!" he cried. "Don't touch me! Don't come near me! I won't have it! I won't have it!"

"Thunderation, pardner!" exclaimed Joyce; "what do you mean? I ain't goin' to harm you. I want to help you." Then he added, pityingly, "I guess he's got the fever an' gone out of his head. So I'll take him along whether he wants to go or not."

He bent over again, seized the wounded man by the shoulders, and forcibly raised him up. At the same moment the cannonade burst out afresh and with increased violence. A blaze of light played over the face of the wounded man, revealing and magnifying every feature, every line.

Joyce uttered no exclamation, but he dropped the man as if he had been a coiling serpent in his hands, and looked at him, an expression of hate and loathing creeping over his face.

"So," he said, at last, "this is the way I've found you?"

The wounded man lay as he had fallen, with his face to the earth.

"No wonder," said Joyce, "you wanted to keep your face hid in the grass! No wonder you hide it there now!"

"Oh, Dave! Dave!" exclaimed the man, springing to his knees with sudden energy, "don't kill me! Don't kill me, Dave!"

"Why shouldn't I kill you?" asked Joyce, scornfully. "What reason can you give why I shouldn't do it?"

"There ain't any. There ain't any. Oh, I know there ain't any," cried the wounded man. "But don't do it, Dave! For Christ's sake don't do it!"

"You murderer! You sneakin', ambushin' murderer!" said Joyce. "It's right for you to beg for your life an' then not get it! Hear them cannon! Hear how they growl, an' see the flash from their throats! They'd like to feed on you, but they won't. That sort of death is too good for the likes of you. The death for you is to be shot like a ravin' cur."

He drew the loaded pistol from his belt and cocked it with deliberate motion.

"Dave! Dave!" the man cried, dragging himself to Joyce's feet, "you won't do that! You can't! It would be murder, Dave, to shoot me here, me a wounded man that can't help myself!"

"You done it, an' worse," said Joyce. "Of all the men unburnt in hell I think the one who deserves to be there most is the man who hid in ambush and shot another in the back that had never harmed him."

"I know it, Dave, I know it!" cried the wounded man, grasping Joyce's feet with both hands. "It was an awful thing to do, an' I've

been sorry a thousand times that I done it, but all the sorrow in the world an' everythin' else that's in the world can't undo it now."

"That's so," said Joyce, "but it don't make any reason why the murderer ought to keep on livin'."

"It don't, Dave; you're right, I know; but I don't want to die!" cried the man. "I'm a coward, Dave, and I don't want to die by myself here in the woods an' in the dark!"

"You'll soon have light enough," said Joyce, "an' I won't shoot you."

He let down the hammer of his pistol and replaced the weapon in his belt.

"Oh, Dave! Dave!" exclaimed the man, kissing Joyce's foot, "I'm so glad you'll let me have my life. I know I ain't fit to live, but I want to live, anyhow."

"I said I wouldn't shoot you," said Joyce, "but I never said I'd spare your life. See that blaze in the trees up there."

A few hundred yards away the forest had burst into flame. Sparks fell upon a tree and blazed up. Long red spirals coiled themselves around the trunks and boughs until the tree became a mass of fire, and then other tongues of flame leaped forward and seized other trees. There was a steady crackling and roaring, and the wind that had sprung up drove smoke and ashes and fiery particles before it.

"That," said Joyce, "is the woods on fire. Them cannon that's been makin' so much fuss done it. I've seen it often in battle when the cannon have been growlin'. The fire grows an' it grows, an' it burns up everythin' in its way. The army is still busy fightin', an' the wounded, them that's hurt too bad to help themselves, have to lay there on the ground an' watch the fire comin', an' sure to get 'em. By an' by it sweeps down on 'em, an' they shriek an' shriek, but that don't do no good, for before long the fire goes on, an' there they are, dead an' burnt to a coal. I tell you it's an awful death!"

The wounded man was silent now. He had drawn himself up a little, and was watching the fire as it leaped from tree to tree and devoured them one after another.

"That fire is comin' for us, an' the wind is bringin' it along fast," said Joyce, composedly, "but it's easy enough for me to get out of its way. All I've got to do is to go up the hill, an' the clearin's run for a long way beyond. I can stay up there an' watch the fire pass, an' you'll be down here right in its track."

"Dave!" cried the man, "you ain't goin' to let me burn to death right before your eyes?"

"That's what I mean to do," said Joyce. "I don't like to shoot a wounded man that can't help himself, an' I won't do it, but I 'ain't got no call to save you from another death."

"I'd rather be shot than burned to death," cried the man, in a frenzy.

"It's just the death for you," said Joyce.

Then the wounded man again dragged himself to the feet of Joyce.

"Don't do it, Dave!" he cried. "Don't leave me here to burn to death! Oh, I tell you, Dave, I ain't fit to die!"

"Take your hands off my feet," said Joyce. "I don't want 'em to touch me. There's too much blood on 'em."

"Don't leave me to the fire!" continued the man. "You've been kind to me to-night. Help me a little more, Dave, an' you'll be glad you done it when you come to die yourself!"

"I must be goin'," said Joyce, repulsing the man's detaining hands. "It's gettin' hot here now, an' that fire will soon be near enough to scorch my face. Good-by."

"For the sake of your own soul, Dave Joyce," cried the man, beating the ground with his hands, "don't leave me to be burned to a coal! Think, Dave, how we eat an' we drank together to-night, like two brothers, an' how you waited on me an' brought the water an' the grub. You'll remember them things, Dave, when you come to die yourself?"

The fire increased in strength and violence. The flames ran up the trees, and whirled far above them in red coils that met and twined with each other, and then whirled triumphantly on in search of fresh fuel. A giant oak burnt through at the base and swept of all its young boughs and foliage fell with a rending crash, a charred and shattered trunk. The flames roared, and the burning trees maintained an incessant crackling like a fire of musketry. The smoke through which the sparks of fire were sown in millions grew stifling.

"God, what a sight!" cried Joyce.

"Dave, you won't leave me to that?" cried Ryder.

Joyce drew down his hat over his eyes to shield them from the smoke. Then he stooped, lifted the wounded man upon his powerful shoulders, and went on over the hill.

*Joseph A. Altsheler.*

## "WAIT FOR ME AT HEAVEN'S GATE."

(OLD SONG.)

NAY, step thou in, my love, mine own!

Love is too sad; keen is regret.

Long be my years and full of tears:

Fare in, sweet love. Forget! Forget!

I shall remember for us two;

Sing thou with angels.—Yet, and yet,

How know I love save by my tears?

Nay, oh, my sweetness of regret!

And thou, oh, if thou be my love,

There is no joy within the gate

That shuts out me, though it be heaven's.

Then wait for me, oh, wait! oh, wait!

*M. S. Paden.*



## HISTORIC DIAMONDS.

PLINY said that in gems might be perceived all the majesty of nature united in small space. Epitomes of all that is most perfect, these flowers of the rock add to splendor of form and color the quality which most impresses the imagination of finite man, durability, while in virtue of their rarity they become most truly precious,—attributes all possessed in sovereign degree by the diamond, the Greek *adamas*, the “indomitable,” the marvellous stone which nothing in nature, so the ancients believed, could impress; which, placed on an anvil and struck with a hammer, as Martial and Lucretius record (an erroneous test, responsible for the loss of many fine stones), shivered the iron without being affected by the blow. Plato described this gem as a kind of kernel formed in gold, condensed from the purest and noblest part of the metal, and prized more for its medical and psychical virtues than for its beauty; in fact, up to the fourteenth century the art of polishing the diamond with its own dust had not been discovered. His theories were sustained as late as the beginning of the fifteenth century by the alchemist Cardan, who believed that precious stones were engendered by juices distilled from gold, silver, and iron in the cavities of the rocks, and who asserted solemnly that these masterpieces of nature, these quintessences of the precious metals, not only live, but also suffer illness, old age, and death. This conviction that even the impenetrable crystal of the diamond encloses its atom of the universal spirit, together with all the vague mystical notions concerning the influence of gems, the waning and rejuvenescence of the pearl, the opal, the turquoise, in accordance with the fortunes of their human owners, the prescriptions of the ancient pharmacopœia which administered powders of topaz or of hyacinth for the cure of hypochondria or sleeplessness, the superstitions of astrological mineralogy, which assigned a stone to each month and to each sign of the zodiac, Theophrastus’s division of gems into male and female, and the theories of Dioscorides, of Avicenna, of Albertus Magnus, and of St. Thomas Aquinas,—all these may be traced back to their origin in that magnificent treasury of jewels, that dwelling-place of mystery and mysticism, India, whose philosophers held the cardinal principle that the souls of the erring might be imprisoned in the rock and serve out an incarnation in a gem.

Certainly the diamonds first known to the Romans were brought from Ethiopia, but in the first century of our era the mines of Golconda were already known, and from that time until the eighteenth century India remained the sole producer of the most precious substance known to man. Pliny mentions six species of diamonds, but distinguishes the Indian as “the true.”

India, with its brown millions laboring in the earth and princes enshrined in an almost incredible luxury, its mud huts and famine and its marble, purple, gold, and jewels,—Flaubert could have described these riches, in language fixed and hieratic, having the hard im-

passive splendor of the gem. Even in statistics and in the presumably sober accounts of European travellers, the magnificence of the rajahs and of their Mogul conquerors remains to dazzle, while the native historians of course soar into impracticable flights of fantasy and fairly disappear under diamonds and lacs of rupees. But, setting these aside, there is still reason why "bountiful as mines of India" should have passed into a byword, why "Golconda" should have the clink of gold. So rich were these mines that in the twelfth century the Sultan Mahmoud, after a reign of thirty-two years, left in his treasury more than four hundred pounds' weight of diamonds. Akber, in the sixteenth century, who made his rare journeys in the midst of a well-appointed guard of a hundred thousand men,—not, as he said, from ostentation, but so that his subjects might respect him,—was accustomed to celebrate his festival-days by being weighed in golden scales against a mass of gold and jewels, which was then distributed among the crowd.

The superb Shah Jehan, the fifth Mogul emperor, marks the climax of the splendor of his line, and personally may stand as a type of the Indian despot. His reign began in 1627 with the murder of all his brothers and their families, a favorite Oriental method for securing stability and peace to the throne; it ended in a prison, where he passed seven years, dethroned by his son Aurungzebe, who in emulation of the parental example had assassinated the two elder brothers, with their children, who stood between him and the crown. Beginning and ending in blood, the rule of Shah Jehan was distinguished by true Oriental magnificence. His court was a most brilliant one, himself a patron of the arts and of letters. Maintaining an unexampled state and a standing army of two hundred thousand men, and expending enormous sums on public buildings and on the furnishings of his palaces, the monarch nevertheless managed to save something from his revenue of nearly two hundred millions, since the imperial treasury at the time of his deposition contained more than a hundred millions in coined money, besides a great amount of uncoined gold and silver, and precious stones. The famous Taj Mahal, erected as a memorial to Shah Jehan's favorite wife, cost the labor of twenty thousand men for twenty-two years and nearly thirty million dollars,—and this in a country where labor is incredibly cheap. Tavernier, a French jeweller and traveller of the seventeenth century, who saw the beginning and the completion of this structure, describes its walls of white marble inlaid with jewelled flowers, some single blossoms containing a hundred stones, cut and polished with the exactness of the goldsmith. To Shah Jehan belonged also that twin marvel, the Peacock Throne, made in the form of the royal bird, the natural colors of the spread tail being represented by rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and other precious stones, setting off a dazzling mass of diamonds. This triumph of extravagance, afterwards carried off by the Persian invaders of the empire, was valued by Tavernier at thirty million dollars. Nadir Shah looted Delhi, retreating with an enormous booty; yet in 1760, when the Mah-rattas took the capital, they coined the silver ceiling and ornaments of Shah Jehan's audience-chamber, and realized nearly a million more.

In those old dynasties all wealth was centralized in the hands of

the ruler and his favorites. In the diamond-mines the descendants of the slaves imported originally for this labor spent their lives digging in the dry beds of the rivers and washing out the precious lumps. The laborer who found a diamond of fair size was awarded by the overseer perhaps an extra week's food; but the diamond, unless indeed it were stolen by the way, concealed in the ear or corner of the eye or swallowed by the naked digger, went into the king's treasury. The regal gem was reserved for those of royal or semi-royal rank—and for the gods. Tavernier describes idols with hands formed of small pearls, with eyes of diamonds or rubies, with collars, chains, bracelets of pearls and other gems. He saw two figures, one of massive gold four feet high, in the form of a maiden; by her side the image of a child, of solid silver; another, on an altar covered with silver and gold tissues, was of black marble, with great rubies for eyes, and a robe of purple velvet embroidered with gems. The idol of Resora, in the great pagoda at Jagrenate, had two diamonds for eyes and a third about its neck, the least weighing forty carats. Into this pagoda, however, no goldsmith was permitted to enter, because once one concealed himself there and stole an eye from the idol,—but died at the door on trying to escape, struck down by the vengeance of the god.

A similar origin is ascribed to the great crown diamond of Russia, the Orloff; but in this case the thief was more fortunate, the idol perhaps less powerful. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a soldier belonging to one of the French garrisons in India became enamoured of the eyes of Brahma in the temple of Seringham. These eyes were diamonds, more brilliant than ever shone under the eyebrows of Crapaud's European divinities. Their lustre captivated his soul. He haunted the temple, and, yielding to the might of the god, became a convert to his worship. At least so he persuaded the priests, who went so far as to admit him to some care of the temple, doubtless trusting Brahma to protect his own. But on a stormy night the convert disappeared, and with him one of the idol's eyes, the other having resisted all his efforts to dislodge it. So Brahma was left squinting, and the perfidious Frenchman sold his prize to a captain in the English navy for about ten thousand dollars. Later it was bought by the Armenian merchant Schaffras for more than five times this sum, and shown by him to Catherine of Russia, who offered for it about four hundred thousand dollars, a life-pension of eighteen thousand, and a patent of nobility. Schaffras refused this offer, and subsequently sold the diamond to Gregory Orloff for the same sum without the patent of nobility. Orloff, part author of Catherine's greatness, and raised by her to the steps of the throne, for whom she struck medals, raised triumphal arches, and dedicated palaces "*par l'amitié reconnaissante*," to whom she offered secret marriage and whom in another caprice she banished,—Count Gregory, being reinstated in favor, offered his imperial mistress two tokens of reconciliation, the St. Petersburg arsenal and the Orloff diamond.

The dashing favorite afterwards married and "ranged himself." He died repentant and reformed. But the splendid stone which bears his name remains as a memorial of the plebeian artillery officer and

courtier, the "savior of Moscow" and the assassin of Paul III. The diamond, which is shaped like a half-egg, rose-cut, and weighs nearly two hundred carats, is set in the sceptre of the Czars of Russia.

The Orloff (which suggested the "Moonstone" of Wilkie Collins) and another stone now in Persia are said to have been cut from fragments of the Great Mogul diamond, seen by Tavernier among the jewels of Aurungzebe. This stone, presented to the emperor by Mir-gimola, weighed in the rough more than seven hundred carats. Aurungzebe intrusted it to a Venetian diamond-cutter resident at his court, Hortensio Borgio; but so unskillfully was the work performed that the diamond was reduced to two hundred and eighty carats. The emperor was furious, confiscated the possessions of the unhappy Borgio, and was with difficulty persuaded to leave him his head.

The Koh-i-Noor is sometimes confounded with the Mogul diamond, but the former weighed less than two hundred carats in the rough. Its great purity, however, gained it the name of "Mountain of Light" and the admiration of the world. Like all the finest diamonds, this stone is of Indian origin. Hindoo accounts state that it was worn by Karna, King of Anga, and hero of the Mahabharata, 3001 B.C. The precision of this date is worthy of notice; the assertion of the Indian chroniclers cannot be impugned. However, the diamond was possessed by Vikramaditya, Rajah of Ujayin, 56 B.C., and thence passed to the rajahs of Malwa and the sultans of Delhi. It was in the treasury when the city was taken by Ala-ed-Din. Sultan Baber of the Mogul dynasty esteemed it at the sum of the daily maintenance of the whole world. Mohammed Shah, great-grandson of Aurungzebe, wore the diamond in his turban at the interview in the tent of his Persian conqueror, when Nadir Shah insisted on exchanging head-dresses as a proof of his regard. By this means he became the possessor of the Koh-i-Noor, as well as of everything else of value Mohammed owned. Shah Sujah, descendant of the Persian, wore the diamond on his arm when, driven from Kabul, he became the nominal guest and actual prisoner of Runjeet Singh. The "Lion of the Punjaub," coveting the stone, forced Sujah to resign it to him, giving in exchange about sixty thousand dollars, and thereafter wore it in an armlet on festive occasions. When he was dying, an effort was made to have him bequeath the diamond to Jaganath, but he expired without any other testament than a nod of his head, which the grand treasurer refused to recognize as valid authority for the transfer of the diamond. It was worn by the successors of Runjeet, and after the murder of Shu Singh remained in the Lahore treasury until 1849, when the British civil authorities took possession of it under the stipulation that all property of the state was confiscated to the East India Company in payment of debts due and the expenses of the war.

The Koh-i-Noor was presented to Queen Victoria June 3, 1850. It was then valued at seven hundred thousand dollars, but was of irregular form and marred by fissures. After consultation with leading scientists of the day, it was finally decided to intrust the recutting to the famous expert, Mr. Coster of Amsterdam. The Duke of Wellington placed the diamond on the cutting wheel. The process occupied

thirty-eight days, and was completely successful, resulting in a brilliant matchless for purity and fire. Thus, after a career embracing all the vicissitudes of Hindoo and Mohammedan rule, the rise and fall of three empires, the great Indian gem now forms the chief ornament of the British crown.

Equally typical are the adventures of the French Regent or Pitt diamond, now in the *Galérie d'Apollon* at the Louvre and part of the crown jewels. This stone was found in the mines of Partal, forty-five leagues south of Golconda, and weighed in the rough four hundred and ten carats. Two years and a sum approximating twenty thousand dollars were spent in cutting it to a brilliant. It was bought at Madras by the grandfather of the first Earl of Chatham, commander of Fort St. George, for sixty thousand dollars, and by him sold in 1717 to the Duc d'Orléans, regent during the minority of Louis XIV., for six hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars. Pitt, in the pamphlet published to clear himself from the charge of having stolen it, says he bought it of one Jamelchund, a Hindoo merchant. But Pope, in the "Man of Ross," expresses a general opinion to the contrary.

St.-Simon tells, as of his own personal knowledge, a different story. He says the diamond was stolen by a person employed in the diamond-mines, who escaped to Europe with it and showed it to several princes, the King of England among the rest, and finally to that prince of speculators, the Scotchman Law. Then at the height of his power in France, Law proposed to the regent to buy the gem for the king. After some hesitation, the bargain was closed, the seller receiving three hundred and eighty-four thousand dollars, with interest on the price until paid, and the fragments resulting from recutting.

At any rate, the diamond passed through many changes of fortune and literally through many hands; for after the fall of Louis XVI. the great jewel, chained and guarded by gendarmes, was shown to the people of Paris, and any workman who chose might hold this epitome of twelve million francs for a few moments in his hard palm.

Napoleon I. wore it in the pommel of his state sword, and pawned it at a pinch to the Batavian government. During the Revolution it was stolen with the rest of the crown jewels from the *Garde-Meuble*, but was recovered through the death-bed confession of one of the thieves, and subsequently shone in the imperial diadem of Napoleon III.

Mawe says that the Abbé Liegés, ambassador to the Court of Berlin, obtained from the King of Prussia a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive by dazzling him with the *Regent* and holding out hopes that France might consent to its cession.

It was to this jewel only, and to nothing less precious, that Pope could compare the transcendent merit of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the same Lady Mary whose reputation he afterwards assassinated and who cried out upon "the wicked wasp of Twickenham." When she was coming back from her famous travels, Pope wrote one of his torrid love-letters to welcome her as "the only equivalent the world affords for Pitt's diamond, so lately sent out of our country; which, after you was gone, was accounted the most valuable thing here. Adieu to that toy!" he cries; "let the costly bauble be hung about the neck of the



baby king it belongs to, so England does but recover that jewel which was the wish of all her sensible hearts and the joy of all her discerning eyes."

Another great diamond connected with French history is the Sancy, an almond-shaped brilliant of fifty-three and a half carats. By some authorities it is said to have been brought from Constantinople by the Baron de Sancy, ambassador of Henry IV. But the story hitherto most commonly accepted, though denied by some historians, is that it was originally owned by the Great Mogul, came into Europe in some manner not known, and formed part of the immense booty taken by the Swiss soldiers after the defeat of Charles the Bold at Granson.

Whole books have been written about this spoil. Inventories innumerable have been printed, and occupy more space in the Swiss chronicles than does any account of the battle itself,—evidence of the impression made upon this poor and rude nation by the mass of precious objects which Philip the Good had passed his time in accumulating and which the art of Flanders had been taxed to embellish. The Duke of Burgundy, intending to hold his court in Savoy and to dazzle Italy with his splendor, then equalled by no European king, had brought with him all the ornaments of his royal state. Among the prizes taken by the Swiss was an immense reliquary of sculptured gold inlaid with large gems, embracing many pieces of statuary and containing more than eighty objects pertaining to the life of Christ. (Since no one was rich enough to buy this, it was broken up and distributed among the cantons by the priests in the church of Lucerne, high mass being celebrated during the proceeding.) Here also was the sword of state, its hilt so encrusted with large diamonds, rubies, and pearls that not a hair could be laid between; a velvet cap with the largest diamond then in Europe (the Austrian) set in gold with pendent pearls; a great seal of solid gold weighing a pound, now in the archives of Lucerne, and greatly missed by Charles of Burgundy, who in documents subsequently signed mentioned its absence; besides three to four hundredweight of silver and silver-gilt goblets, tapestries, dresses of cloth of gold, wagon-loads of silver coin, and a great number of diamonds and precious stones.

Of the three great diamonds found in the tent of Charles, one is said to be now in the papal tiara, another in the treasury of Vienna, and the third, after returning to India, was brought back again to Europe and bought by the King of Portugal. In 1589 Anthony of Portugal pledged it among other stones to De Sancy, treasurer of the King of France, who kept it upon payment of a hundred thousand livres. The baron sent it to his royal master by a servant, who was waylaid and assassinated in the forest of Dôle. One would think a guard might have been provided, if not for the servant, at least for the gem. But the man was faithful, even beyond death, to his trust. His body was opened and the diamond found in his stomach. Later this stone came into the hands of James II. of England, who sold it to Louis XIV. for twenty-five thousand pounds. In 1792 it disappeared with the crown jewels; they were recovered with the single but important exception of the renowned "blue diamond," which has



never reappeared. The Sancy was bought by Napoleon I., who sold it to Prince Demidoff. It is now in Russia, and valued at one hundred and eighty-six thousand dollars.

One of the most beautiful diamonds of France is the Eugénie, a perfect oval brilliant, purchased by Napoleon III. for his wife, and destined to perpetuate among the jewels of the crown the memory of the lovely Spanish girl, the unhappy Empress.

What shall be said of that "unutterable business of the diamond necklace," which helped to level with the dust the throne and the head of a more unhappy queen? Consider the summary of a famous epigrammatist: "Red-hatted Cardinal Louis de Rohan; Sicilian jail-bird Balsamo Cagliostro; milliner Dame de Lamotte, with 'a face of some piquancy;' the highest church dignitaries waltzing in Walpurgis Dance with quack-prophets, pickpurses, and public women;—a whole Satan's Invisible World displayed!"

In plainer words, the Prince of Rohan, grand almoner of France, was duped by his enchantress, Madame de Lamotte, with the aid of the notorious Cagliostro, into some transactions regarding a necklace of diamonds which Marie Antoinette had refused to buy. It was the time of the American war. The price of the necklace was, as Louis XVI. said, the price of two frigates. "We need ships, not diamonds," said Marie Antoinette, and dismissed the jeweller, who reported afterwards that he had sold the diamonds in Constantinople for the favorite Sultana. In reality the stones had been disposed of in England by the husband of the Lamotte. But the cardinal asserted that they had been bought for the queen, and in the *esclandre* which followed the discovery of his part in the affair, the name, favors, and personality of Marie Antoinette were impudently dragged in. Public feeling was roused to frenzy, and it was hostile to the queen. That "love of a whole nation" which had burst forth in acclamations toward the young Dauphine, presented to the people on the balcony at Versailles, had given place, twenty years later, to a ferocious hatred.

Lamotte, the "Necklace-Countess," had escaped from the Salpêtrière,—perhaps had been suffered to escape, in the hope that she might be forgotten. A vain hope, for from her refuge in England—she had fled to the enemy of France, branded on both shoulders with a V (for Voleuse, "Thief"), and with a heart full of deadly venom—she sent forth fresh broods of lies, greedily swallowed, in its present mad humor, by the French populace. The Necklace-Cardinal, arrested in full pontificals, was taken to the Bastille. But the parliament, having condemned Madame de Lamotte to be whipped, branded, and imprisoned, simply acquitted her Cardinal-accomplice. This act, a terrible blow to Marie Antoinette, signalized the triumph of the parliament over the crown. The accumulated revenge of the people for all the wrongs and the mistakes committed by French kings since Charlemagne was not long in following. And the Queen of France, hated for offences which were not hers as well as for frivolities that were, must be persecuted even to the block by reverberations from the affair of the diamonds. Pathetic, in the light, or shadow, of all this, are Marie Antoinette's confidences to her *dame d'honneur*. "She talked to

me a long time," says Madame Campan, "about the total change which took place in the tastes and desires of women in the period between twenty and thirty years of age. She told me that when she was ten years younger she loved diamonds madly, but that she had no longer any taste for anything but private society, the country, the work and the attentions required by the education of her children."

Assuredly this was not a woman to expend sixteen hundred thousand livres for a necklace.

In 1774 the French crown jewels, including the Regent and the Sancy, contained seven thousand four hundred and eighty-two diamonds. Superior in every way was the collection of Napoleon I., significantly gathered from all parts of Europe. But this again is surpassed by the one subsequently made, containing sixty-four thousand eight hundred and twelve diamonds, and valued at nearly four million dollars. According to statistics of 1872, within a year the Bonaparte family alone had thrown upon the market diamonds to the value of a million and a quarter.

The fluctuations in the price of fine stones depend a great deal, in fact, upon politics. After Napoleon's return from Elba, for instance, an enormous fall was immediately evident in the market value of diamonds. One can imagine the flurry which extended from crowned heads to princelings and nobilities. Recollect the picture of Lady Bareacres sitting helpless in her carriage before the hotel in Brussels, with her diamonds sewed into her habit, and Becky Crawley refusing to sell her horses for the two biggest of the jewels, and laughing out of her window a prophecy that the French would make prize of them all,—“the carriage and the diamonds, I mean, not the lady.”

In the middle of the eighteenth century the discovery of the Brazilian diamond-fields caused a tremendous panic in the trade; and again in 1868-9 the opening of the South African treasures, which have produced in thirty years more than the entire world's yield for two hundred years previous. Over ninety-eight per cent. of the diamonds of commerce now come from Kimberley. Yet the Indian gem still keeps its proud pre-eminence for quality and value. As for the few stones found elsewhere, the whole yield of Java, America, and Australia may almost be held in the palm of the hand; while even the verification of Humboldt's prediction that diamonds would be found in the Urals has not proved of great importance, the name of *Krestowosdwiseaski* being chiefly memorable for its own sake. The tiny diamonds of China and Japan, ranging from the size of a pin-head down to that of a millet-seed, and found by men wearing straw slippers, who walk about in the dry beds of streams,—the slippers being subsequently burnt and the diamonds taken from the ashes,—are used for jewelling the movements of watches. The fineness of the work upon these tiny rose-cut crystals, which weigh sometimes fifteen hundred to the carat, may be imagined.

The country now richest in diamonds is Russia. Besides the Orloff, the Polar Star, a brilliant remarkable for purity, the Shah, a gem engraved with a Persian inscription and presented by the son of Abbas Mirza to the Emperor, and special collections in the treasury, there are

three crowns composed entirely of diamonds. That of Ivan Alexievitch contains eight hundred and eighty-one; that of Peter the Great, eight hundred and forty-seven; that of Catherine II., two thousand five hundred and thirty-six. A brilliant red diamond, weighing only ten carats, but supremely rare and curious by reason of its color, was bought by Paul I. for a hundred thousand rubles.

Among colored diamonds there is one of a green tint, now in Dresden and formerly owned by Augustus the Strong. The Grand Duke of Tuscany possessed a blue one, and the famous Hope diamond was also blue and remarkably beautiful.

No account of diamonds could omit some mention of the great Braganza, the Portuguese crown jewel, which is said to weigh one thousand eight hundred and eighty carats, and is valued by the jewellers of Brazil, where it was found, at one billion three hundred and ninety-five million dollars! But it has been suggested that this diamond is a white topaz—in which case the millions vanish. The Portuguese government refuses to allow the stone to be examined.

The crown diamonds of the Brazilian empire were valued at more than eighteen million dollars. One of the principal stones was set in the handle of the cane of John VII. Still more remarkable, the doublet of ceremony of Joseph I. of Portugal had for buttons twenty diamonds, aggregating the neat sum of four hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars.

Brazil, however, which produced the diamond-handled cane and the Braganza, where diamonds are found in the crops of fowls and adhering to the roots of cabbages, and were formerly used by the gold-hunters for counters in card-playing,—Brazil must be allowed to be a country of marvels. Though modern scientists, denying that diamonds have souls or power to cure the toothache, agree that they may be smelt and tasted, it has remained for the officers of the Brazilian Junta Diamantina to assert that they produce music. By rubbing two diamonds together close to the ear, these experts declare that they can distinguish the true from the false!

*Neith Boyce.*

### THAW.

**T**IME in the long, chill Norland silence slept,  
While the white warder, snow, his chamber kept.

Dreaming the stars were young, and he a child,  
His wise old lips did mutter, and he smiled.

Then went a warm stir through the wintry land,  
And waking brooks sang, "Surely spring's at hand!"

*Charles G. D. Roberts.*

## THE CIVIL AUTHORITY.

"GIVE him up!"  
"Kill him!"  
"Hang him!"

The dusty glare of flickering gas-jets fell across the crowd which surged around the jail and filled the jail-yard. The yard was surrounded on three sides by a high stone wall, surmounted by a railing of pointed iron bars: to the top of the wall, hanging by the iron rail, clung shock-headed boys, who were the noisiest of the shouters; the men in the yard below were bent on an errand too grim for aimless hootings. In their hands were sledges and crowbars, pickaxes and clubs; here and there was one who carried a gun; revolvers were freely displayed, not boastfully, but as by those who had a terrible intention to use them terribly, a cold, set purpose of grim business, which made no loud threats, and was the grimmer by that omission. The boys on the wall shouted, and the rearmost of the crowd joined in with screeched curses; but the men in front were silent, save for a continuous, low murmur, an undertone of terrorizing sound. The pressure from those in the rear forced the front nearer to the jail; the cautious or cowardly impelled the others to a more pronounced demonstration. Left to themselves, the foremost men might have delayed precipitating the crisis; but the impulse from the rest spurred them on and on, until the line of trouble impending was overpassed, and it became the point of trouble actual.

The murmur grew to a growl; the growl swelled to a roar. Inside the jail the watchers moved uneasily in their places. In a cell near the centre of the tier a shivering prisoner crouched in the corner farthest from the door. His dusky face was of an ash-gray pallor; his hands worked together, and he prayed aloud, mixing the Deity, the sheriff, the commander of the troops, and the leaders of the mob together in his unintelligible petitions. Sometimes he grew sullen, and cursed the authorities, the law, and all mankind in all-embracing curses. Again he was silent, and pulled closer about him a tattered old bed-quilt, which he had drawn from the narrow bunk at the side of his cell, and which was wrapped around his head and shoulders, although the June night was close and stifling hot. From time to time he glanced furtively through the bars of the heavy door. Then a fresh outburst of shouting from beyond the grated windows made him turn to the corner again, and the prayers hurried each other on his gray lips.

In the narrow passage-way before the cells two sentries paced up and down, or paused, with low-voiced comment, to listen to the noise outside.

Beyond the solid steel doors which barred access to the cells was a long corridor, fronting on the jail-yard. A single gas-light flickered at one end. Knots of guardsmen stood at the windows, a strained

intensity in their attitudes telling of some expected happening, the nature of which was told by the way their long brown Springfield came to the ready at every increased roaring of the mob below. A slim young officer walked up and down the hall, fingering the hilt of his sword, shifting the holster on his belt back or forward, or clasping his hands behind his back, only to loosen them and go to fingering the sword-hilt once more. At the outer entrance to the corridor, which was locked and barred, a rank of men stretched from wall to wall. They stood in lounging positions, their hands clasped around the barrels of their rifles; the ugly, flat-topped caps of the enlisted men were pulled down over their brows; cartridge-boxes were pushed to the front and open; there was a constant alertness in their nervous ease. One of them turned and muttered to his next-rank man: a sergeant reproved him sharply.

"Let 'em talk, Toomey," said an officer on whose shoulders were the double bars of a captain. "Let 'em talk, as long as they don't make any noise.—It's easier waiting," he said, turning to the man in civilian dress who stood beside him. "When a man's got to keep quiet he gets to thinking too much: talking relieves their feelings, and a thing don't seem half as big if you can tell it to some one else."

"That's so," said the man in plain clothes; "kind o' divides the weight."

They fell silent again, and the plain-clothes man shifted uneasily on his feet. His eyes were restless, glancing from place to place apprehensively; his thumbs were in his pockets, and with his fingers he beat a nervous tattoo against his thighs.

Outside, in the jail-yard, the crowd grew denser. Fresh accessions to the rear pressed the front close and closer to the building; men pushed and struggled from behind, striving to get to the front; those in front bore back, in the endeavor to keep from being driven too close to the walls. It was as though there were an invisible line in front, over which they refused to pass, and from time to time they raised their voices in protest against the urgency of their coadjutors in the rear. On the outskirts of the crowd a few women wandered aimlessly, or asked of the men nearest to them questions impossible of answer: they were women whose status was written on their faces, coarse-grained and unintelligent, or intelligent only to the degree of cunning; they were more bitter in their words than even the leaders of the mob. In truth, the leaders of the mob were men of few words: the men in the rear were the men who talked of what ought to be done; they were full of threats and execrations and ferocious urgings.

A woman who stood where the light of a dim gas-jet fell across her dead-yellow hair turned to a man near her.

"What's the use o' all this devilment?" she asked. "Why don't you do something? Only reason you're so hot is 'cause he's a nigger. 'F he was white you'd be home, sleepin'."

"Think so, do you? Maybe, you're so smart, you can tell why we're waitin'."

"Why you're waitin'? Huh! That's why."

The woman pointed to one of the windows of the jail, where the

dim light glinted on the brass cross-arms on the caps, and shone dull on the bronze rifle-barrels. At that window a squad of soldiers looked down on the mob beneath. Another squad stood by the window next in the row; and at other windows were other squads, all watching the crowd with strained intensity of gaze, and listening, as for some expected order.

"Will they try it, do you think?" asked the big private who leaned against the window-casing.

"Dunno," said the corporal.

"S'posin' they do, can they break in these doors? Look toler'ble solid to me."

"Mostly looks," answered the corporal: "couple o' men with sledges can smash 'em in pretty quick."

"S'pose we'll fire 'f they do?"

"Fire?" said the corporal. "Sure. You heard what the captain said: fire 'f they come up to the pavement in front, there. Course we'll fire. What d'you s'pose we're here for? Playin' marbles? You make me tired."

"Goin' to be hot 'f we do: there's lots of men in that crowd that we know. There's Billy Walters, now. See him over there by the big fellow with the gun?"

"That don't cut any ice with me. Course I don't want to shoot fellows I know; but they been warned to keep away, and it ain't my business to furnish brains to them that 'ain't got enough to get out o' the rain. 'F they go up against the game they got to take what comes their way; and 'f they fool with the captain they'll get it good and strong."

"Do you think the captain 'll keep on holdin' this 'f one volley don't stop 'em?" queried the private next to the big man.

"Got to," said the corporal, "as long's the sheriff tells him to. Out o' our hands, now, and all we can do is to obey orders. Gosh! listen to 'em yell!"

"Don't talk so much." It was an officer speaking. "Save your wind; you may need it."

He passed on, and the men stood silent, watching the motley mass of heads below, and always listening for the order which would end the strain of waiting. Along the corridor a faint dim gleam from the street-lamps came through the windows, falling on pale faces and young eyes fixed in doubtful anticipation upon the angry mob. Here and there a man shifted uneasily where he stood; they handled their loaded rifles carefully; at each fresh outburst of shouts they swung closer to the windows, and the rifles came to the ready, only to be dropped again as no forward movement was made by the crowd.

The sheriff walked nervously up and down the corridor, pausing, now and then, to speak to the officers, or to look from one or another of the windows. Each time he appeared at a window the crowd cursed him, and called out threats of what would befall him at the next election. After one of these times the sheriff turned to the captain.

"What d' you think, cap? Better not try to hold out, had we?"



Can't do nothin' against that crowd out there; only cause bloodshed and hard feelin's. Wouldn't you c'nsider that we was overpowered?"

The officer looked the sheriff over, from his face, with its shifting eyes, to his uneasy legs, which would not allow him to remain long in one spot.

"Overpowered?" he repeated. "Not much we ain't. I can hold this jail just as long as you want me to. I know what I can do."

"Mighty unpopular we'll be, 'f anybody gets hurt. Don't you think we've done about all any one c'd expect of us? We've held 'em off since afternoon."

"Didn't you take an oath when you went in office?" demanded the captain.

"Course I did."

"Well, then, what else can you do? I took an oath, too, and I ain't getting paid four thousand a year for keeping it, either; but I'm going to stick to it, just the same."

"Oh, well, I'm going to keep mine, too."

"Y'are, are you? That's all I wanted to know. You back me up, and there won't anybody get inside this jail, unless they come in as prisoners."

"Oh, I'll back you up all right."

"Nough said, then. No need of any more talk."

The officer turned and walked down the corridor, throwing back his head and clinching his hands aggressively as he went. He glanced out of the windows as he passed, and at the groups of men, as though searching to know how far discipline and obedience might be depended upon. Silent and grimly careless the men stood, in the uncertain light, as his eye fell on squad after squad, and he turned his gaze away from them at last, his face settling into lines of satisfied determination. At the end of the corridor the slender lieutenant met him.

"Anything new?" he asked.

"Nothin', except that the sheriff's dead scared."

"He ain't the only one: there's lots of places I'd rather be than here."

"Me too," assented the captain. "Ugly job."

"Case o' must, though. Don't see that we can do anything else."

"Anything else? There's nothing else to do. The 'holiday soldier' business don't loom up very strong about this time, does it?"

"Not much."

"Mob's getting mighty ugly: hear 'em howl. I'll give 'em something to howl for, if they try any monkey business here. They've been warned enough. I've told 'em all I'm going to: 'f they keep on, they'll find there ain't any blank cartridges round here."

"Blanks be dashed. Lord, how they yell! Say, capt'n, if anybody gets hurt there'll be no living in this town for us."

"You're getting like the sheriff, are you?"

"No, I'm not. But you know how it'll be. Newspapers givin' us the worst of it; everybody'll hate us: we'll get it all round."

"Don't I know it? But it can't be helped. Here we are, and here we're going to stay as long's there's any need. That mob would

as soon get us as the nigger, now; and 'f they try to get in here they'll get h—ll shot out of 'em. There ain't any foolishness about this: you c'n just bank on that."

The two silently walked the length of the corridor together. Outside, the crowd roared louder than ever; at the windows the squads of guardsmen looked down on the jail-yard; every foot of space seemed to have an occupant, and every rioter joined in the yell which greeted the sheriff when he appeared at one of the windows.

"Come down out o' that!"

"Give him up!"

"Where's the keys?"

Voices hoarse with rage and excitement hurled epithets, jeers, threats, and curses at the sheriff; weapons were shaken at him, and the rage of the mob grew with each moment that the official remained in sight.

"Mad, ain't they?" the captain remarked, joining the sheriff at the window. "Got any tobacco?"

"No, I 'ain't got any," said the sheriff, after a search through his pockets. "Guess I'd better keep away from the winder; seems like they had a special pick on me, don't it? Wonder 'f they thought I was goin' to give up my prisoner first time they asked me? They don't know me 'f they did: I ain't that kind, I c'n tell you. 'S you say, I took an oath, an' I'm a-goin' to keep it. Course, 'f they was to get in here and overpower me, I couldn't do nothin'. Nobody 'd say I didn't hold to my duty 'f that was the case, would they? Can't expect a man to do more'n his duty; and I don't reckon it's my duty to get killed tryin' to save a nigger. Mind, I ain't sayin' give him up. That ain't me. What I do say is that we can't do more'n so much; and when that's done, why, then we done all we can."

"Depends on how much you want to do."

"I want to do just as much as any other man," the sheriff replied, with heat. "Can't no man do more'n he can, can they? I don't see that you've got any call to be makin' these insinuations about me. Ain't I holdin' the man? Ain't I resistin' the mob's much as any one can? What d'you mean, anyhow? Mebbe you think you're boss here?"

"Oh, no, I don't."

"Well, you talk like it, anyway. 'F you ain't boss, all you got to do is to look after them soldiers o' yours, and not sling so much criticism round here."

"All right, all right. No need to get mad. All I want to know is, do our orders hold good?"

"Hold good? What d'you mean? Think I change my mind every minute? You do just what we settled on, 'thout runnin' to me every whip-stitch. I don't believe you'll have to do anything, anyhow. That mob 'd run 'f you shot over their heads. Say," he went on, with sudden eagerness, "say, don't you think that'd be a good idea? Shoot over their heads, and kind o' scare 'em? 'S an awful thing to shoot men, specially men you know, right in your own town."

"I know it is," said the captain, gravely. "I'm not hankering

for the job. I'm no butcher. What are you going to do, though? Firing over their heads is played out: that's what encourages mobs, monkey business like that. We told 'em we'd shoot, and we've got to keep to what we said, or we'll get run over. This ain't play. If you want to keep the law, you've got to hold that man; and if you hold the man, you've got to keep the crowd from getting in here. That's how I size it up, and I don't see any other way."

"Well, that's what we want to do. But there'll be big trouble 'f any one's hurt, you see. And I'll never see my second nomination, let alone election. And all for a man that oughter to be hung, anyway. It makes me mad!" And the sheriff turned away, banging the door viciously behind him as he passed out of the corridor.

Second nomination? Election? The captain walked along the corridor, stopping to ask the lieutenant for tobacco. Cutting off a piece, he looked at it a moment, put it into his mouth mechanically, and opened the door of the upper hall, on which the cells faced. Instinctively returning the salute of the sentry, he asked,—

"What's he doing?"

"Prayin' and swearin' by turns, sir. Worst scared thing you ever saw."

The negro in the centre cell looked over his shoulder. At sight of the officer he arose from his knees spasmodically and sprang to the front of the cell, where he clung to the bars. At the grated doors of other cells appeared faces, pallid and ghastly in the dim light. The negro threw himself on his knees, still clinging to the grating of the cell.

"Capt'n," he called, "oh, capt'n, fo' Gawd's sake, whut they doin'? C'm' here, capt'n. Please, sir, tell me whut they doin'."

"Nothing more than they've been doing all afternoon. Yelling to us to give you up."

"Oh, Lawd! Oh, capt'n, yo' all ain't a-goin' to do it, air yo'? Don't gimme up. Yo' mustn't, capt'n: hit's ag'in' the law t' gimme up. Yo' won't, will yo'? Capt'n, yo' done knowed me ever since we was boys. Yo' won't let 'em git me, will yo'?"

"Not if I can help it."

"Oh, praise Gawd! I knowed yo' wouldn't. I'm only a pore nigger, capt'n; but I knowed a gen'l'man like yo' wasn't a-goin' to fergit the little nigger boy whut us'ter work at yore maw's house. Oh, Lawdy, capt'n, lissen to 'em! Oh, fer Gawd's sake, don't let 'em git me! I was drunk, capt'n; 'deed I was. I done it, but I was drunk. Oh, please, sir, fer the Lawd's sake, don't go. Capt'n! Capt'n! Oh, capt'n!"

His voice echoed along the cells in shrill despair, but the captain was already at the end of the passage; and the negro, as the heavy door banged shut, crawled into the dingy bunk, where he pulled the tattered quilt over his head in a fresh access of fear.

As the officer entered the outer corridor he halted suddenly, listening with startled intensity. The mob was silent. He swept a swift glance around. The soldiers were still at the windows; everything was as he had left it. Hurrying forward, a single voice came to him,

as of one outside; and then he saw the sheriff leaning far out of one of the windows, haranguing the mob.

"Go home. I ask you to go home. Don't stay here. Let the law take its course. The best thing for you to do is to go home quietly. It's against the law for you to be here. We can't give the prisoner up to you; and you can't take him without gettin' hurt. I'm a peaceful man, fellow-citizens, and a friend to you all, and I tell you to go home. You can't break these doors——"

"The h—ll we can't!"

"No, you can't; and there's soldiers inside, too. They are here to help me, and as long's they're here you can't do anything. I——"

"Git in, there!"

"Give us the nigger!"

"You and your little soldier-boys be d—d!"

The yells of the crowd drowned the sheriff's voice. A stone whizzed by his head, struck the opposite wall, and dropped to the floor. The captain grasped his arm, and pulled him back from the window.

"Are you asking 'em to try and get in here?" he demanded, savagely.

"Let go my arm! What d'you mean——"

The rest of the sentence was lost in a storm of howling from outside; and the captain whirled to the window.

"They're coming now, for sure," he heard some one say.

Below, the mob surged back and forward; the shouts were fiercer and louder; angry faces, upturned to the windows, gleamed here and there in the dusky mass; weapons were waved; the crowd heaved toward the building, and then settled back, for an instant: the invisible line was still there. From the rear a woman's piercing tones came clear, through a gap in the shouting.

"Oh, come home," she said.

At every window the guard closed up; their rifles threatened silently, the bronze barrels giving dull glints of light; under the capvisors their faces were white, and their eyes flashed here and there over the mob, or back for a hasty glance toward the officers. Muscles twitched in the young faces; hands shifted uneasily on the rifle-stocks, or gripped until the knuckles showed white under the straining grasp. Somewhere in the crowd a revolver banged; the bullet chipped the stone above the captain's head.

"Here they come," whispered the big private.

In the crowd there was a sudden, strange silence for a moment; then the yells broke forth again, with a new note in them of eager, hungry savagery. The mob swung forward. For an instant three or four sprang ahead, and then were lost in the tumultuous rush which overtook them.

The yelling mass below neared the walls. A whistle pierced the tumult. From the windows jetted swift lines of flame, and a shattering volley tore the air.

A crash; and then stillness on the mob, an intense hush, a swift paralysis. A blue-gray smoke-cloud floated up the walls and out over the jail-yard. Men gasped, then held their breath. From their nests

in the eaves, startled sparrows flew above the crowd with frightened twitterings.

In the jail-corridor sounded the clink, clink of empty shells, falling to the floor, as nervous fingers fumbled at boxes, or shoved fresh cartridges home, with a snap-snapping of breech-blocks, while staring eyes were fixed upon the scene outside.

From below came a new sound, the noise of agony. On the outskirts of the crowd men were running. The mob surged back from the jail-walls; in the space left clear lay prostrate forms, outstretched or huddled in attitudes of grotesque horror on the stone-paved way. One figure half arose, wavered backward, and then fell toward the retreating mob, with a gasping cry. Men, running back from the crowd, with apprehensive glances at the windows, carried off the limp forms. In the crowd men bore up other men, who reeled and staggered to and fro.

The corridor was very still. The guard stood in silence. Here and there one drew a long breath, with a slow heaving of the chest and a lifting of the shoulders. Turning their eyes, with an effort, from the mob, they glanced at each other, as though seeking confirmation for their thoughts, to be assured that all this thing had happened, that the dark forms on the pavement below had been a grim reality. A slight, pale-faced private threw his rifle to the floor and turned his face from the window, with a burst of shuddering sobs. Others swore, apparently at nothing, and busied themselves with their weapons; no one paid any heed to the private who wept, except that his next-rank man stooped and picked up his rifle. The smell of burnt powder hung in the air.

"Well, they got it." The big private turned from the window, and let his steel-shod rifle-butt drop heavily to the floor.

"Yes, they got it," the corporal assented, slowly.

Others of the squad turned toward the two. Something like relief came into their faces; they moved closer to the speakers, and the tense grip on the rifles relaxed.

"How many 'd you count?"

"Didn't think o' countin'," said the big private. "Seems to me I saw five."

"That's what I thought," said the corporal.

"Wonder who there was. Bet we knew some o' them."

"Bet we knew 'em all," the corporal said.

"Guess they've got enough for once. Looks like they'd be dern fools to try it again."

"Hope they have."

"Say, did you see Billy Walters?" the big private asked.

"Yes. I saw him help pick up one of 'em. He ain't hurt."

"Glad o' that."

The men fell silent once more, looking out to the street, where the mob still lingered. By the rear wall of the corridor stood the sheriff. The captain went up to him.

"They didn't get in that time," he said.

"Did you—— Was there any——" the sheriff began, hesitatingly.

"Four or five," said the captain.

"Four or five! Oh, Lord! That's awful. The people'll never forget that: that ends the whole thing. Who—who——"

"I don't know. I couldn't tell."

"Is the mob gone?"

"Gone?" The captain pointed through the window.

The street outside the jail-yard was packed from side to side. There was no shouting in the crowd, but the low, ugly murmur never ceased.

"What 'd you shoot for?" the sheriff demanded, with shaky bluster.

"What's the use o' shootin'?"

"Use? They ain't in here, are they?"

"But they're goin' to try again; I know they are. And there's too much been done, now. Four or five men. How'm I ever goin' to live here? What 'd you shoot for? All them men for one nigger!"

The sheriff's face was gray and twitching; his fingers picked at the frayed edge of his cuff. The captain looked at him a moment.

"Do you want that crowd stopped if they try to get in here again?" he asked.

"What! How? They won't stop."

"They won't? We've got more cartridges."

"Good Lord! no more shootin'. They won't need shootin'. 'F I warn 'em away they'll go. They've had enough."

"Warning didn't do much before."

"'Twill now. They've had enough. They know I mean what I say, now. I'll tell 'em to disperse. They can be bluffed off to-night, and by to-morrow they'll get over wantin' the prisoner. Yes, I guess that's the best way. They're hotter at you than they are at him, now."

"Let 'em be hot. We've got to go through with it now."

"Mebbe they'd quiet down 'f you went home. Mebbe 'f you took your men away they wouldn't be so hot, and wouldn't try anything more to-night."

"Wouldn't they? They'd be in here in ten minutes after we left."

"No, they wouldn't. It's you they've got it in for, now: they've forgotten the nigger. Mebbe you better go."

"Go? Go? What do you mean?" And the captain, who had half turned to walk away, swung on his heel and faced the sheriff angrily.

The sheriff's face grew stubborn. "You better go," he said.

"Go? And this business half finished? You must be crazy! I'm not going."

"You'll go 'f I say so. I called you here, and I've got the power to send you away again. I guess I know what I can do." The sheriff, turning his back on the other, walked to the end of the corridor. At the door he paused irresolutely for a moment, and then walked hastily back, his eyes upon the captain.

Outside, the mob was again growing threatening. The foremost of them were re-entering the yard. Hoarse shouts arose to the listeners within the walls.

"Better warn 'em again, hadn't I, sheriff?" called the captain, stepping toward a window. Springing forward, the sheriff grasped



him roughly by the shoulder, and pulled him back, saying something earnestly, in a tone too low for the rest to hear. The captain wrenched away from the sheriff's grasp.

"No! d—n you! no!" he cried.

The sheriff spoke again, and the captain answered him, briefly and fiercely. The sheriff shook his head stubbornly. The captain swung on his heel toward the men. In his face were chagrin and rage and shame; his hands worked with his sword-hilt; he turned toward the sheriff, as though to speak, then to the men again.

"Fall in!" he said.

The lieutenant looked at him blankly.

"Fall in!" the captain repeated.

The first sergeant stared, and took a step or two toward the captain, bringing his hand up in salute, dazedly. A question was on his lips.

"Take your place, sergeant." There was a note of bitter disquiet in the captain's voice; he jerked his sword violently from the sheath.

The men, turning from the windows, looked from the captain to the sheriff, and back to the captain again, wonderingly. They moved reluctantly, dragging the rifle-butts along the floor.

"Fall in, there! Lift those rifles! Fall in, in a hurry, too!"

Slowly the men formed the long double rank. Their eyes were on the captain, and they stumbled against each other as they fell in line. As they dressed, they looked at each other, as if for an answer to a bewildering question.

"What's this for? Where we goin'?" asked the big private.

The corporal shook his head, and fumbled with the catch of his cartridge-box. The lieutenant stepped to the inner door, and called to the guards inside. They came out, and fell in with the others, with questioning looks. By the great doors of the jail, staring sullenly at the soldiers, stood the sheriff, keys in hand. Outside roared the mob.

"Fours right!" The line swung into column. The captain, pointing to the sheriff, said something, briefly and angrily, to the lieutenant.

"What's that? Where'd he say we was goin'?" the big private whispered to the corporal.

"Home."

"Home?" said the big private. "Home? Oh, h—ll!"

*Henry Holcomb Bennett.*

### FAITH.

**A**N early robin sang and swayed  
On leafless branch, all undismayed,  
Though fast the snow-flakes fell.  
He sang, "I know full well  
These flying snow-flakes fall to bring  
White violets forth to greet the spring."

*Grace F. Pennypacker.*

*THE ANTICS OF ELECTRICITY.*

THE mention of electricity of a frisky behavior will suggest to most people some of its actions on the trolley, or about the street-cars, or in connection with electric-light wires, when it breaks loose,—which are all of too dangerous a character to be amusing; noting not at all its pranks on their own desks, though no “live” wire be within a mile of them.

It does not always occur to our minds that electricity is playing a little trick when we take a sheet of writing-paper from a pile and find it does not come alone, but drags along another sheet or more, “sticking closer than a brother.”

Similar action of the immense sheets of book-paper on a printing-press in certain states of the atmosphere—when one is slid on to the form of type and has one or more others partially adhering to it for a moment, then taking flight away from the press to some dingy resting-place—frequently keeps the pressman in an uncomfortable state of fidgets.

Such action results from the attraction and repulsion of frictional electricity,—the same kind that is produced by the chafing of the silk flaps against the rotating glass disk in the so-called “electrical machine.”

An experiment with the same kind of electricity, which can easily be tried, is to apply gentle friction to a thin piece of cloth or paper; when, on bringing it near the wall of the apartment, it will be attracted thereby, and adhere to the surface—be it wood, plaster, or paper—for a brief time.

There is another familiar source of frictional, or static, electricity, that the youngsters of a family often find quite too entertaining for the comfort of cats,—when in a dark, cool corner they persistently stroke the creature the wrong way of the fur. To the younger children, the sparking and snapping that result are the cause of much pleasure and wonder.

Every one who has changed his flannels in an unwarmed room in midwinter has learned from the snapping which occurs, and the blue sparks he has seen over his shoulders, if in the dark, that he also is a sort of electrical machine. A more positive demonstration of this fact may be obtained by shuffling across the floor, then touching a finger or knuckle to the tip of a metallic gas-burner, with the gas turned on by the hand of another, or by his own other hand insulated by a glove of rubber or of thick leather; for the gas will instantly flash into flame from an electric spark. A favorable condition for this exploit is found in silk hose on a woollen carpet, a dry atmosphere, and a cool room.

This ability to make one's self an electric generator may at times prove very convenient,—as, for instance, when your match-box has been robbed.

Nor is the human hair altogether without the electric quality found

in the fur of the cat,—as can be discovered by running one's dry hands through the unmoistened capillary covering; and in some states of the atmosphere, especially in cold, aurora-borealis weather, one with a fighter's hair-cut may sometimes perceive that each separate hair is rising on its end, accompanied by a feeling in his scalp like that he had in a bad scare in the dark, when but an urchin.

Another variety of electrical phenomena in the human being is witnessed in the "brush lights" of thin pale blue flame sometimes seen rising from the heads or uplifted hands and from the iron-shod staffs of mountain-climbers in such an atmosphere as precedes a snow-storm. Similar lights are sometimes observed at the extremities of masts and spars of vessels at sea, known as St. Elmo's fire; for which the sailors have names according to their number,—a pair of such being called "Castor and Pollux." This action is owing to the objects thus marked being near the contact-plane of two strata of atmosphere of different polarity, positive and negative; the body or mast serving as a collector and a conductor between these electrical opposites. Possibly, by a miraculous interposition, the "tongues of flame" which rested on the heads of believers on the wonderful Day of Pentecost may have been of this character; and it is also quite likely that some appearance of this kind on the heads of the three worthies transfigured on the Mount may have given the original suggestion for the halo which artists, from very early time, have placed upon the heads of prophets and saints.

Brush lights, however, arise from a steady flow of electricity of low tension, frictional electricity being of very high tension.

The roundish masses of bluish light often seen at the extremities of the masts and spars of vessels in storms at sea, in the torrid zone, are said to have a nucleus of gelatinous substance gathered from the flying spray that often sweeps over the topmasts. At such times, too, still larger balls of bright phosphorescent appearance are sometimes seen rolling along the surface of the sea. Electricity, varying from static to dynamic, is present with these phenomena. Among sailors, such appearances on ships are known as "corposants,"—a word corruptly formed from the Latin *corpo santo*, the holy body, referring to the nimbus of light usually depicted on the Catholic pictures of Christ. They are always regarded by the common sailors with superstitious awe, and are feared as betokening disaster; which, however, rarely happens to well-built and well-conducted vessels.

The light of corposants is brighter than the phosphorescence frequently observed in the dark about decaying fish, or rotting vegetable matter in bogs, forests, and other damp places. The light of the fire-fly (the Yankee "lightning-bug")—which is a true electric light—is, in proportion to its size, much brighter than that of corposants or any other of the appearances just mentioned.

Another object of a similar nature is that popularly known as "Jack o' Lantern," the *ignis-fatuus* of the learned,—the false fire that leads astray. This is generally observed in autumn in boggy tracts and along marshy streams. It usually consists of a bright misty mass of oval form, having much the appearance, at a few rods' distance, of

the radiance of a lantern, the latter itself invisible. Instances have been reported of persons who had followed it from curiosity or mistake and been led into deep marshes and dangerous quagmires. The light moves on in devious courses, keeping at a distance, or disappearing and reappearing in the most puzzling manner, and effectually evading close inspection.

This light is considered to have a basis of phosphoric gas arising from matter fermenting in the wet summer-heated soil, and condensed in the cooler autumn atmosphere, so that electrical action results. The course of the phosphorescent mass is determined by the eddying currents of the air, which it follows, rarely rising more than a yard from the ground.

Of a vastly higher degree of intensity are the "fire-balls" which sometimes appear within buildings that are struck by lightning. Yet these balls—usually as large as the human head—are not often the cause of any fatality. If a human body comes in the course of one, it sometimes turns aside, as though there were magnetic repulsion, but a person near it usually experiences a painful shock. These balls are probably formed from the dust gathered in by the concentric action of the low-tension electricity, quickly changing to vapor, then to gases, in the heat. Their motion appears to depend on magnetic attraction and repulsion.

This concretionary action of electricity has also been witnessed in a few instances at the inception of a thunder-cloud,—only the phenomenon was in the sky, and on a vastly greater scale. One such instance was observed by myself, when the nucleus of the storm was formed perhaps not more than one or two miles away. The appearance, when first noted, was of three misty masses of oval form, with the long axis vertical, their position being side by side, near each other, but not in contact. Their elevation was apparently about half-way between the earth and the zenith. Though they were without motion relatively, each had a very lively internal action, as of lines of pale fire running diagonally around the mass, as the housewife winds yarn into balls. Indeed, these masses appeared much like the mass of flax wound on a distaff, ready for spinning,—the lines of mist, instead of flax, on the outside, veiling the running threads of fire within. Attending this was a constant low crackling or snapping.

It may be interesting to the reader to learn that three successive showers, with brief intervals between, followed this spectacle, the first beginning within half an hour. The storm-nucleus quickly became enveloped in rapidly extended clouds of great density, forming before my eyes from the previously invisible vapor in the atmosphere. The showers were short, with heavy rainfall, and frequent vivid flashes of lightning.

In general, persons who are not at all afraid of electricity in its obscure forms are too fearful of lightning to enjoy watching its play in the clouds preparatory to a discharge earthward; but those whose curiosity gives them courage learn that there is no display of fire-works equal to that which the Almighty sometimes spreads before us in the sky. Here the antics of electricity are of the most lively movement

and varied form. One in proper position in regard to the clouds may observe how the charge gathers, by the slender lines of bluish light running hither and thither from the denser portions of the clouds, disappearing from view as it diffuses itself in other cloud-masses whose condensation has not proceeded so far as to bring the electric tension to the sparking point; for this electricity of the clouds is, primarily, of the frictional kind, like that generated by the electrical machine or produced on the cat's back.

When, by the progressive condensation of the clouds, the electricity—which always closely invests all floating particles of water or other substance—becomes sufficiently intensified, a giant spark is, as it were, crowded out, and sets off toward the earth,—which, locally, at that moment, is negatively electrified. If of great intensity and volume,—shown by its brilliant whiteness,—it makes an almost direct path through all obstacles to a point in the earth, perhaps almost exactly beneath its starting-point. If the discharge be less in quantity and intensity,—indicated by its bluish color,—the long spark is frequently turned aside from its course, and we behold a crinkled line, often running a long distance but little inclined from the horizontal. This is what is called “chain-lightning.” When the spark is small but intense, showing reddish-white color, it makes its way in a direct rush until the obstacle before it becomes too great, when it turns sharply and rushes straight on in another direction until the resistance increases sufficiently to turn its course again; it then rushes away nearly in the direction it first took, until forced to make another sharp angle. This action continues until it reaches earth. This kind is properly described as zigzag lightning.

When we have seen the flash, and even more when we have heard the thunder, we need no longer be afraid, for the danger is past. The terrible voice from the sky—the reverberation from the rending of a path through the atmosphere by the fiery spark—bears only a message of mercy, announcing with authority that now each trembling child is safe.

*George J. Varney.*

### WHEN THEY FORGIVE.

MAN may forget when love has been unkind,  
 If then love smile, content to leave behind  
 The stings of yesterday; so full his heart  
 Of welling bliss that pain may hold no part  
 When he forgives.

Not so with woman. Freely she forgives  
 For love's dear sake; but ever while she lives  
 The bitter with the sweet must mingle yet  
 Deep in her heart; for she cannot forget  
 When she forgives.

*Mary E. Stickney.*

## JIM TRUNDLE'S CRISIS.

THEY were expecting Jim Trundle at the Cross-Roads that spring morning. His coming had been looked for even more anxiously than that of Sid Wombley, the wag of the "Cove." Sid himself, when he dragged his long legs into the store, forgot to think of anything amusing to say as he looked the crowd over to see if Jim had preceded him.

It was on the end of his tongue to ask if Trundle had come and gone, but for once he said nothing. He seated himself on the head of a soda-keg and began to whittle the edge of the counter. Sid Wombley quiet suited the humor of the group better on this occasion than the same voluble individual in his natural element, so no one spoke to him, and all continued to watch the road leading to Trundle's cabin.

The silence and the delay were too much for the patience of Wade Sims, a bold, dashing young man in tight-fitting trousers, sharp-heeled boots, and a sombrero like an unroped tent. He was, as he often expressed it, "afraid o' nothin' under a hide," and if "the boys" had seen fit to give Jim Trundle notification, in the shape of a letter he would shortly receive, that he was a disgrace to the community, he saw no reason for so much secrecy. He wasn't afraid of the verdict of any jury that could be empanelled in the three counties over which he traded horses and disposed of illicit whiskey.

"I reckon thar's no doubt about the letter bein' ready fur 'im," he remarked to Alf Carden, who stood in the little pigeon-holed pen of upright palings which was known as "the post-office."

"I reckon not," was the reply, "when it's about the only letter I got on hand."

"I could make a mighty good guess who drapped it," said Sims, with a grin at a one-armed man who had once held the position of book-keeper at a cotton-gin, and who wrote letters and legal documents for half the illiterate community, "but I wouldn't give 'im away if I was under oath."

"I have an idee who's goin' to drap it," spoke up Sid Wombley from his soda-keg, and his sudden return to his natural condition evoked the first laugh of the morning. At that moment a little boy, the son of the store-keeper, who had been playing on the porch, came in quickly. His words and manner showed that he knew who was in request, if his intellect could not grasp the reason for it.

"Mr. Trundle is comin' acrost the cotton-patch behind the store," he announced, out of breath. Then silence fell on the group, a silence so complete that Jim Trundle's strides over the ploughed ground outside were heard distinctly. The next moment Trundle had crawled over the low rail fence at the side of the store, and, with clattering untied brogans, was coming up the steps.

The doorway, as his tall lank figure passed through it, framed a perfect picture of human poverty. His shirt, deeply dyed with the



red of the soil, was full of slits and patches worn threadbare. The hems of his trousers had worn away, revealing triangular glimpses of his ankles, and a frayed piece of a suspender hung from a stout peg in the waist-band behind.

He greeted no one as he entered. A silent tongue was one of Jim Trundle's peculiarities. No one had ever gotten a dozen consecutive words out of him. He strode to the end of the store, thrust his hand into an open cracker box, bit into a large square cracker, and sent his eyes foraging along both counters for something to eat with it,—cheese, butter, a bit of honey, or a pinch of dried beef. He was violating no rule of country store etiquette, for Alf Carden's customers all understood that those things left on the counters were to be partaken of in moderation. I think the *habits* of the place had gradually introduced this custom themselves years before, when Carden was so anxious to draw people from the store across the river that he would willingly have given a customer bed and board for an indefinite time if by so doing he could have deprived his rival of the profit on a bag of salt.

Jim Trundle wasn't going to ask if there was any mail for him; that was plain to the curious on-lookers, and their glances began to play back and forth between Carden and the cracker consumer, making demands on the former and condemning the latter for stupidity.

Wade Sims winked when he caught the storekeeper's eye, and nodded towards the gaunt robber who had squatted at the faucet of a syrup-barrel and was cautiously trailing a golden stream over an immaculate cracker.

"So you didn't git no letter fur me, Alf," said Sims, significantly. "Seems like no mail don't come this way here lately hardly at all. I hope all the rest'll have their ride fur nothin' too."

Alf Carden understood, having given Sims a letter half an hour before, and he smiled. "No," he said, "thar hain't nothin' fur any of you except Jim Trundle; has he come along yet?"

Jim stood up quickly, and laid his besmeared cracker on the barrel. "Me?" he ejaculated, and a white puff shot from his crunching jaws; "I—I reckon you are mistaken."

"I reckon I kin read," replied Carden, still acting his part nonchalantly, and glancing askance at Sims to see how that individual was taking it. "It is jest Jim Trundle in plain A B C letters. It is either from somebody that cayn't write shore 'nough writin' ur is tryin' to disguise his handwrite."

Carden threw the letter on the counter. It lay there fully a minute while Jim Trundle wiped his hands on his trousers, gulped down a mouthful of cracker, and stared helplessly round at the upturned faces. Then he reached for the letter, and, with trembling fingers, tore it open and read as follows:

"Jim Trundle. This is to give you due notic. We the reglar organized band of White Caps of this settlement hav set on yore case an decided what we are goin to do about it. Time and agin good citizens have advised you to change yore way of livin, but you jest went along as before, in the same old rut.

"You are no earthly account, an no amount of talkin seems to do you any good. Yore childern are in tatters an without food, an you jest wont do nothin fur them. This might hav gone on longer without our action, but last Wednesday you let yore sick wife go to the field in the hot brilin sun, an she was seed by a responsible citizen in a faintin condition, while you was on the creek banks a fishin in the shade.

"To night at eight oclock we are comin after you in full force to give you a sound lickin. Yore wife an childern would be better off without you, and we advise you to leave the county before that time. If we find you at home at eight oclock you may count on a sore back.

"Yours truly, the secretary."

The spectators observed that Jim Trundle had read every word of the communication. His eyes, in their sunken sockets, darted strange, hunted glances from face to face, as if seeking sympathy; then, as if realizing the futility of the hope, he looked down at the floor. He leaned back against the counter so heavily that Carden's thread-case rattled its contents and the beam of the scales wildly swung back and forth.

The group furtively feasted themselves on his visible agony, but they got nothing more, for Jim Trundle did not intend to talk. Talking was not in his line. He knew that at eight o'clock that night he was going to be punished in a way that would be remembered against the third generation of his descendants,—that is, if he did not desert his family and leave the country.

"Kin I do anything fur you in the provision line, Jim?" asked Carden, for the entertainment of his customers. "I've got some fresh bulk pork. Seems to me you hain't had none lately."

Trundle refused to answer. He only stared out into the golden sunshine that lay on the road to his home. He saw through Carden's remarks, and his heart felt heavier under the thought that before him were some of the faces which would be masked later on. He wondered if those men knew that a lazy, worthless vagabond could feel disgrace as keenly as they could.

There was nothing left for him to do except to go home. He wanted to turn the mind-pictures of his wife and children into helpful realities. Somehow they had always comforted him in trouble. Oh, God! if only he could have foreseen the approach of this calamity! As he moved out of the store he felt vaguely as if his arms, legs, and body had nothing to do with his real, horrible self except to hinder it, to detain it near its spot of torture.

Outside he drew a long, deep, trembling breath. His breast rose and expanded under his ragged shirt and then sank like a collapsed balloon and lay there while he thought of himself. He was a dead man alive, a moving breathing horror in the sight of mankind.

He was sure that it was his strange nature that had brought him to it. Nature had made him happy in rags, oblivious to material things. Had he been endowed with education he might have become a poet. He saw strange, transcendent possibilities in the blue skies;

in the green growing things; in the dun heights of the mountains; in the depths of his children's eyes; in the patient face of his wife.

What an awakening! A shudder ran over him. He felt the lash; he heard Wade Sims's voice of command; then his lower lip began to quiver, and something rising within him forced tears into his eyes. He had begun to pity himself. If only those men really understood him they would pardon his shortcomings. No human being could knowingly lash a man feeling as he felt.

The road homeward led him into the depths of a wood where mighty trees arched overhead and obscured the sky. He envied a squirrel bounding unhindered to its home. Nature seemed to hold out her vast green arms to him: he wanted to sink into them and sob away the awful load that lay upon him. In the deepest part of the wood, where tall rugged cliffs bordered the road, there was a spring. He paused, looked round him, and shuddered anew, for something told him it was at this secluded spot that he would receive his castigation.

He passed on. The trees grew less dense along the way, and then on a rise ahead of him he saw his cabin, a low, weather-beaten structure that melted into the brown ploughed fields about it. He was anxious to see his wife. Could it be true that she had almost fainted while at work? If so, why had she not mentioned it to him? He had noted nothing unusual in her conduct of late; but how could he? She was as uncommunicative as he, and they seldom talked to each other.

As he passed the pig-sty in the fence-corner, even the sight of the grunting inmate seemed to remind him that he was going to be whipped by his neighbors. He shuddered and felt his blood grow cold. He shuddered with the same thought again, as if he were encountering it for the first time, when he dragged open the sagging gate and looked about the bare yard. In one corner of it he had once started to grow some flowers, but his neighbors had laughed at his attempt so much that he allowed them to die and be uprooted by his chickens. His mind now reverted to that period, and he decided that it was this and kindred impulses that had always kept him from being a good husband, father, and citizen like his sturdy industrious neighbors.

Well, to-morrow he was going to turn over a new leaf,—that is, if—but he could not look beyond that evening at eight o'clock. He had imagination, but it could picture nothing but every possible detail of his approaching degradation: the secluded spot; the masked circle of men; a muffled talk by Wade Sims; the baring of his back; the lash.

His wife was in the cabin. She held a wooden bowl in her lap and was shelling peas. As he towered up in front of her in the low-roofed room, for the first time in his life he noticed that she looked pale and thin, and as he continued to study the evidences against him in growing bewilderment, he felt that even God had deserted him.

She looked up.

"What's the matter?" she asked, in slow surprise.

"Nothin'." But he continued to stare. How thin her hair seemed since she had had the fever! Perhaps if he had insisted on having a

doctor something might have been done that was neglected. Poor Martha! how he had made her suffer! The whipping would not be so hard to bear now, except that—if she were to know—if she were to witness it— Ah, he had not thought of that! Yes, God had left him to the mercies of Wade Sims and the rest of his neighbors.

Her eyes held a look of deep concern.

"What are you lookin' at me that a-way fur?" she asked.

He made no answer, but turned to a stool in the chimney-corner and sat down. She must not know what was going to happen. He would not escape it by deserting her, for he was going to be a better man, beginning with the next day. He would stay with her and protect her, but she must never hear of the whipping. He understood her proud spirit well enough to know that she could never get over such a disgrace.

Then out of the black flood of his despair a plan rose and floated in his mind's view. They would gather at the store, and just before the appointed hour would march along the road he had just traversed. He would make some excuse to his wife for being obliged to absent himself for a little while and go to meet them. If he told them he had voluntarily come to be whipped, they might agree to keep the fact from his wife. Yes, God would not let them refuse that, for even Wade Sims would not want to pain an unoffending woman when he was told how Martha would take it. Then a sob broke from him, and he realized that his head had fallen between his knees, that tears were dripping from his eyes to his hands, and, moreover, that Martha was looking at him as she had never looked before. She wanted to ask him what was the matter, but she could not have done it to save her life.

"Are you ready fur dinner?" she asked, still with that look in her eyes.

"Yes, I reckon, ef—ef you are. Whar's the childern?"

"Behind the house, hoein' the young corn. Do you want 'em?"

"No; jest thought I'd ask."

She emptied the peas from her apron into the bowl, and put it on a shelf. Then she walked across the swaying puncheon floor to a little cupboard, and began to busy her hands with some dishes, keeping her eyes the while on him. He evidently thought himself unobserved, for he allowed his head to fall dejectedly again, and stared fixedly at the hearth. Surely, thought Mrs. Trundle, Jim had never acted so peculiarly before. Wiping a plate with a dish-cloth, she moved across the floor till she stood in front of him. He looked up. The gleaming orbs in their deep hollows frightened the woman into speech she might not have indulged in.

"Look y' here, Jim, has anythin' gone wrong?"

"No." He drew himself up, and rubbed his eyes. "Did you say dinner was ready?"

"You know the table hain't set. Look here, are you sick, Jim Trundle?"

"No." His eyes rested on her. That was what he wanted to ask her, if only he could have found the words. She turned away un-

satisfied. The next moment she fanned him with the cloth she was spreading for the meal, then she put a plate of fried bacon and a pan of corn bread on the table, went to the back door, and called the children from their work.

He studied them one by one with horror as they came in, wondering what this one or that one would think if they should learn that their father had been whipped for neglecting them and their mother. At the table, however, he studied his wife chiefly. The children were young and healthy, and devoured their food like famished animals, but she was only pretending to eat the piece of bread she was daintily breaking with her fingers and dipping into the bacon-grease. The "Regulators," as they called themselves, were right: he had allowed a sick wife to go into the hot sun to do work he ought to have done. He thought now of the lash again, but he did not shudder. It could never pain him like the agony at his heart.

He spent that long afternoon under an apple-tree behind the cabin, mending a harrow that was broken, stealing glances at his wife, longing to open his heart to her, watching the progress of the sun in its slow descent to the mountain top, and feeling the chill of the lengthening shadows. All nature seemed mutely to announce the coming horror. At sundown he went to the shelf in the entry, filled a tin pan with fresh spring water, and washed his face and hands. Then he went in to supper, but he did not eat heartily.

"Don't you feel no better, Jim?" asked his wife, her manner softened by a vague uneasiness his actions had roused. A suggestion of his mute suppressed agony seemed to have reached her and drawn her nearer to him.

"I hain't sick; I'll be all right in the mornin'."

Through the open door he watched the darkness thicken and heard the insects of the night begin to chirp and shrill. He had the curse of introspective analysis, and resolved that they were happy. He used to whistle and sing himself when his youth rendered it excusable. How very long ago that seemed!

All at once he rose, pretended to yawn, and said something to his wife about going over to Rawlston's a little while; he would be back by bedtime. She wondered in silence, and after he had passed through the gate she tiptoed to the door and looked after him uneasily.

The landscape darkened as he went along the road towards Carden's store. It was quite dark in the wooded vale. When he reached the spring he stopped to await the coming of Wade Sims and his followers. He wondered if the spot was far enough from the cabin to prevent Martha from hearing anything that might take place. He hoped it was, and, more than anything else, that they would not be drinking. They would be more apt to listen to his request if they were perfectly sober. The rising moon in the direction of the store now made the arched roadway look like a long tunnel.

It would soon be eight o'clock. He sat down on the root of a tree and tried to pray, but no prayer he had ever heard would come into his mind, and he could not invent one to suit the occasion. He heard voices down the road, then the tramp, tramp of footsteps. A dark

blur appeared on the moonlit roadway at the mouth of the tunnel, and grew gradually into a body of men.

Jim Trundle stood up. They should find him ready.

"Hello! what have we here?" It was the voice of Wade Sims. The gang of twenty men or more paused abruptly. There was a hurried fitting on of white cloth masks.

"Who's thar?" called out the same voice, peremptorily, and the hammer of a revolver clicked.

"Me,—Jim Trundle."

"Huh!" Wade's grunt of surprise was echoed in various exclamations round the group. "On yore way out'n the county, eh? Seems to me yore time's up. We'll have to put it to a vote. It's past eight o'clock, an' you've had the whole day to git a move on you. Whar you bound fur?"

"I ain't on my way nowhar. I come down here a half-hour ago to meet you-uns, an' I've been a-waitin'."

"To meet we-uns? Huh! Jeewhilikins!" It sounded like Alf Carden's voice.

"I—I 'lowed you-uns would likely want to do it here, bein' as it was whar you-uns tuck Joe Rand last fall."

Silence fell,—a silence so profound, so susceptible, that it seemed to retain Trundle's words and hold them up to sight rather than hearing for fully half a minute after they had ceased to stir the air. Even Wade Sims's blustering equipoise was shaken. His mask appealed helplessly to other masks, but their jagged eye-holes offered no helpful suggestions.

"Well, we are much obleeged to you," said Wade, awkwardly; and he laughed a laugh that went little further than his mask. "Boys, he looks like he wants it; you needn't feel squeamish."

"I've been studyin' over it," said Trundle, furnishing more surprise, "and I've concluded that I ort to be whipped, an' that sound. In fact, neighbors, the sooner you do it the better I'll feel about it."

The silence that swallowed up his clear-cut words was deeper than the one which had followed his other remark. Seeing that no one was ready to reply, he went on, "I did come down here, though, to see ef I couldn't git you-uns to do me a sorter favor, ef you jest would."

"Ah!" Wade Sims was feeling better. "I must say I was puzzled about yore conduct in comin' to meet us. Well, what do you want?"

"I'm ready fur my whippin'," said Trundle, "because I think I deserve it. I've been so lazy an' careless that I never once noticed till I got yore letter that my wife was a sick woman. I *did* let her go to the field in the hot sun when I was a-fishin' on the creek-bank in the shade. I thought her an' all of us would like some fresh fish, an' I forgot that our corn-patch was sufferin' fur the hoe. She didn't. She 'tended to it. But—now I come to the favor I want to ask. She hain't done no harm to you-uns, an', as foolish as it may seem, it would go hard with her in her weakly condition to hear about me a-goin' through what I'll have to submit to. She has got a mighty sight of pride, an' it's my honest conviction that she would jest pine



away an' die ef she knowed about it. I ain't a-beggin' off from nothin', understand; it's only a word for her an' the childern. You kin all take a turn an' whip me jest as long as you want to, but when it's over an' done with I 'lowed you mought be willin' to say nothin' to anybody about it. Besides, I've made up my mind to lead a different sort of a life, God bein' my helper, an' it would be easier to do it if I knowed Martha had respect for me; an', neighbors, I am actually afeerd she won't have it if she knows about what's goin' to take place to-night. I—I think you-uns mought agree to that much."

Masks turned upon masks. Some of them fell from strangely set visages into hands that quivered and failed to replace them. It was plain to the crowd that they had not elected a leader who could possibly do justice to the infinite delicacy of the situation. In fact, something was struggling in Wade Sims that was humiliating him in his own eyes, making him feel decidedly unmanly.

"I think yore proposition is—is purty reasonable," he managed to say, after an awkward hesitation. "We hain't none of us got nothin' ag'in' yore wife; ef she is sick, an' hearin' about this——"

But his inability to continue was evident to his most sincere admirers.

Trundle sighed in relief. He knew that not one in the gang could possibly be harder of heart than their blustering leader. "I wish, then, gentlemen," he said, calmly, "that you'd git it over with. I don't know how long it's a-goin' to take,—that's with you-uns; but she thinks I've gone over to Rawlston's to set till bedtime, an' it'll soon be time I was back."

"That's a fact," said Wade Sims, slowly, as if his mind were on something besides the business before him, and he looked round him. The band stood like white-capped stones.

Then it was proved that Sid Wombley, the wag of the valley, had more courage of his convictions than had ever been accredited to him. It sounded strange to hear him speak without joking. His seriousness struck a sort of terror to the hearts of some of the most backward. There was a suspicion of a whimper in the tone he manfully tried to straighten as he spoke.

"Looky here, Jim," he said, and he stepped forward and tore off his mask, "I got a feelin' that I want you to see my face an' know who I am. Sence I heard yore proposal, blame me ef I hain't got more downright respect fur you than fur any man in this cove, an' I want to kick myself. You've got the sort o' meat in you that ain't in me, I'm afeerd, an' I respect it. I'm a member o' this gang, an' have agreed to abide by the vote of the majority, but they'll have to git a mighty move on themselves an' reverse their decision in yore case, ur I'll be a deserter. I'd every bit as soon whip my mammy as a body feelin' like you do."

"That's the talk." It was the voice of Alf Carden. All at once he remembered that Jim Trundle, after all that had been said against him, did not owe him a cent, while nearly every other man present had to be dunned systematically once a week. "Boys, let 'im go," he said: "I'm a-thinkin' we hain't fully understood Jim Trundle."

"I hain't the one that got up this movement," said Wade Sims, in a tone of defence. Where sentiment was concerned he was out of his element. "Ef you was to let 'im off with a word of advice, it wouldn't be the fust time we conceded a p'int."

That settled it. With vague mutterings of various sheepish kinds the crowd began to filter away. Some went down the road, and others took paths that led from it.

Sid Wombley lingered with Jim a moment. Not being able to turn the matter into a jest, and yet being a thorough man, he felt very awkward.

"Go on home, Jim," he said, gently, his hand on Trundle's arm. "Your wife'll never know a thing about it; they'll all keep it quiet, an' the boys'll never bother you ag'in. I—I'll see to that."

They shook hands. Trundle started to speak, but simply choked and coughed. Sid turned away. An idea for a joke flitted through his mind, but he discarded it as unworthy of the occasion.

Jim went slowly up the hill to his cabin. The moon was now up, and as he neared the gate he saw his wife walking about in the entry. She was not alone. A woman sat on the step. It was old Mrs. Samuel, the aunt of Wade Sims, a neighbor, who sometimes dropped in to spend the evening. Was it an exclamation of glad surprise that he heard as he opened the gate, and did his wife stand still and stare at him excitedly, or was the sound the voice of one of the children turning in its sleep? Was her pallor a trick of the moonlight and shadows?

The faces of both women were expressionless as he approached them.

"Good-evenin', Jim," was Mrs. Samuel's greeting.

He nodded and sat down on the steps, his back to his wife. They were all silent. Mrs. Trundle stepped to the water-shelf at one side, and peered at his profile through the shadows, her face full of vague misgivings. Then she sat down behind him in a chair, and studied his back, his neck, the way his shirt lay, her hands clinched on her knees, the fury of a tiger in her eyes.

Ten minutes passed. Then Trundle roused himself with a start. He must not be so absent-minded; they must suspect nothing.

"Whar's the children?" he asked, not looking towards his wife.

"In bed a hour ago."

Her tone struck him dumb with apprehension. He stared over his shoulder at her. Her face was hidden in her hands. He glanced at the visitor and saw her avert her eyes. Could she have heard of the plan to whip him and revealed it to his wife? He felt sure of it: Wade Sims could not keep a secret. His wife thought he had been punished. No matter; it was the same thing. His heart was ice.

Mrs. Trundle bent nearer him. She was trying surreptitiously to see if there were any marks on his neck above his shirt-collar.

Presently her pent-up emotions seemed to overwhelm her. She began to sob and rock back and forth. Then she glared at Mrs. Samuel.

"I'd think you'd have the decency to go home," she said, fiercely,

"an' not set thar an'—an' gloat over me an' him like a crow. It's our bedtime."

"Why, Martha, what's the——" Trundle stood up in bewilderment.

"I was jest gettin' ready to go," said the visitor, humbly, and she hastened away. Trundle resumed his seat. What was to be done now? He had never seen his wife that way, but he loved her more than ever in his life before. She watched Mrs. Samuel's form vanish in the hazy moonlight: then she sat down on the step beside her husband.

"Jim," she faltered, "I want you to lay yore head in my lap." She had put her thin, quivering arm round his neck, and her voice had never before held such tender, motherly cadences.

"What do you want me to do that fur?"

"Jest because I do. I hain't never in all my life loved you like I do at this minute. I'd fight fur you with my last breath; I'd die fur you. Jim, poor, dear Jim, you needn't try to hide it from me. Mis' Samuel had jest told me what the White Caps was goin' to do when you turned the corner. I know you went down to the spring to meet 'em so me an' the childern wouldn't know it. Many a man would 'a' gone away an' left his family ruther than suffer such disgrace. Oh, Jim, I'd a million times ruther they'd whipped me! I'll never git over it. I'll feel that lash on my back every minute as long as I live. They hain't none of 'em got sense enough to see what a good, lovin' man you are at the bottom. I'd ruther have you jest like you are than like any one o' that lay-out. We must move away somewhars an' begin all over. I don't want the childern to grow up under sech disgrace."

Her hand passed gently round to the front of his shirt. She unfastened it, and began to sob as she turned the garment down at the neck. "Oh, Jim, did they hurt you? Does it——"

"They didn't whip me, Martha," he said, finally recovering his voice. "Sid Wombley kinder tuck pity on me an' stood up fur me, an' they all concluded to give me another trial. I hain't lived right, Martha, I kin see it now, an' to-morrow I'm a-goin' to begin different. These fellows have got good hearts in 'em, an' after the way they talked an' acted to-night, I hain't a-goin' to harbor no ill will ag'in' 'em."

Mrs. Trundle leaned towards him. She began to cry softly, and he drew her head over on his shoulder and stroked her thin hair with his coarse hands. Then they kissed each other, went into the cabin, and went to bed in the dark, so as not to wake the children.

*Will N. Harben.*

## THE RACE.

LIFE is a race for every human soul:  
Blest he who runs with honor for his goal!

*Clinton Scollard.*

## LITERARY NOMENCLATURE.

SHAKESPEARE has remarked contemptuously concerning mere names, and has drawn attention to the fact that what we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, which, of course, is undeniable. It may have been that names were unimportant in his day: certainly they were spelt with a curious looseness. His own, composed of two of the simplest of words, words, owing to the habits of the times, much commoner then than now, appears in more than one guise, most of us spelling it as above, though Mr. Charles Knight gives preference to the form Shakspeare, not to mention the "Shikspur" of that pre-eminently bad speller, Sarah, the first Duchess of Marlborough, or "Molberry," as her grace sometimes wrote it. But one of our modern poets seems of a different opinion. Hood exclaims against being burdened with a low or mean name, and demands,—

What mortal would be a Bugg by choice,  
As a Hogg or a Grubb or a Chubb rejoice,  
Or any such nauseous blazon?  
Not to mention many a vulgar name  
That would make a door-plate blush for shame  
If door-plates were not so brazen.

And this time, at all events, one feels inclined to side with Hood, for is it not on record that a celebrated man once refused a baronetcy for this very cause? His Christian name had previously been concealed under the vagueness of the initial B, but had he accepted the proffered honor it would have been daily revealed as Bartholomew, owing to the custom of addressing baronets by both names in full after the title "Sir."

But the names of human beings are merely an item in the science of nomenclature. Many an invention has been piloted to success by a cunningly devised name; and as for patent medicines, the name is of chief importance, next, of course, to the advertising of it, which now holds the key to success once erroneously supposed to belong to merit. Names of new joint stock companies are often the subtlest of lures. And the names of books have been held of such importance that Jeremy Collier, the pugnacious non-juror, has declared, "Now when a *Poet* can't rig out a Title Page, 'tis but a bad sign of his holding out to the Epilogue." So we may safely assume that authors naturally desire propitious names for their books, and we fear that mere contrariety caused Mrs. Parr to entitle one of hers "John Thompson, Blockhead;" also that they would incline to something appropriate as well as neat, in spite of such a title as "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.," by the Rev. Laurence Sterne, concerning which a recent biographer of that most unsavory cleric considers that it is hard to say which the book contains less of, the life or the opinions of Tristram Shandy.

Yet the faculty for choosing attractive, nay, even suggestive or appropriate, names is by no means invariably an attribute of genius. The reading public expect a book to be well and fitly named, though every author is not an adept at it in the ratio of his capacity for writing. Mr. Hardy, for instance, has severely handicapped one of his most picturesque and most romantic novels with the milk-and-water title of "A Pair of Blue Eyes." Such a title for such a book is almost as misleading as Cardinal Newman's "Grammar of Assent" was to the librarian who catalogued it among the school primers.

Mr. Hardy, however, is seldom happy in his choice of names. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" is very good indeed, but the rest barely attain mediocrity, or fall below it. "The Hand of Ethelberta" and "The Return of the Native" are a trifle better than "Two on a Tower," but how tame such titles sound beside Mr. Gilbert Parker's "Seats of the Mighty," with its splendid resonance, or the fanciful delicacy of Mr. James Lane Allen's "The Choir Invisible"! Nor does it appear that he is unsuccessful for want of trying: one of his books enjoys the singular distinction of having had three separate and individual names, not two together, after the fashion in which Ouida sometimes delights, but each in its several and appointed time. It appeared first in *Harper's Magazine* as "The Simpletons," but almost immediately became "Hearts Insurgent," under which title it endured until its dismal ending, reappearing shortly afterwards as "Jude the Obscure." So that upon the title of the book which in the opinion of very many of his readers least merits praise, Mr. Hardy has apparently lavished the greatest care. But it is noticeable throughout his work that he pays little attention to the sounds of words, being almost exclusively occupied with their meanings. Some reason still remains to be found to account for a most extraordinary taste in naming his women: Bathsheba, Thomasin, Picotee, Baptista, Eustacia, Viviette, Fancy, and Lucetta are whimsical beyond comparison, and would give a most erroneous notion of the author's powers if taken as any indication of them.

For one who usually makes his words pay for themselves in sound as well as in sense, Mr. Rudyard Kipling is a little disappointing in the names of his books. "Many Inventions," "Plain Tales from the Hills," and "Soldiers Three" are commonplace and not impressive. "The Naulahka," "Life's Handicap," and "The Seven Seas" are better, while "The Jungle Book" sounds mysterious and promising. His best titles, however, are to be found inside and not outside his books,—the titles of the individual stories and poems. "The Story of Uriah," "The Sons of the Widow," "The Mare's Nest," "The Conundrum of the Workshops," "The Finances of the Gods," "The Amir's Homily," "Moti Guj, Mutineer," and "The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows," are all good, such as catch the eye and ear at once. "In the House of Suddho" has a very eerie, Indian sound and appearance, which are fully justified by the story itself. It is like Mr. Kipling's audacity to name a story "Pig," yet it is a very good story. "Watches of the Night" and "False Dawn" are capital burlesque titles with rather a tragic touch, and we experience a genuine shudder

on looking back at its title after reading "At the Pit's Mouth." Many of this author's titles, however, are more or less grim or humorous enigmas, to which the stories themselves furnish the solutions: merely another phase of his method of keeping the reader's mind constantly on the alert. Such is "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney," also "The Recrudescence of Imray" and "The Mark of the Beast," with many others. The last named calls to mind a taste some writers have for using easily recognized quotations as titles for their books. Among them we have from Mr. Howells "A Foregone Conclusion," from Mr. Grant Allen "This Mortal Coil," and from Hugh Conway "Slings and Arrows," they, as well as the authors of "A Grey Eye or so," "Thy Name is Woman," "Perchance to Dream," supplying themselves from Shakespeare, while Mr. Hardy gives us "Far from the Madding Crowd" from Gray, and Mr. James Payn, Mrs. Southworth, and Mr. Kipling search the Scriptures and produce "Thicker than Water," "Cruel as the Grave," and "Bread upon the Waters." Then we have one from Macaulay, and a sensational one too, "Facing Fearful Odds," by Gordon Stables, and another author gives us one from Kingsley, "Women Must Weep," while Miss Haraden patronizes Longfellow for "Ships that Pass in the Night." These are, of course, quite permissible; but not so Mr. Christie Murray's "One Traveller Returns," against which a serious protest must be raised: such twisting of a fine phrase into an opposite meaning might become a fashion, with most disastrous results. "Paradise Almost Lost" is another offence of the same order.

"Euthanasia" is an odd title for a book, yet there is one owning it. For a work of fiction "Hyperæsthesia" is one degree worse. "The Palimpsest" is a good promising title—after one has been to the dictionary to find what it means. "Thoth," also, is a little bewildering to an average reader.

It is curious to notice what a fondness there is for using certain words in book titles. Take for instance the word "golden." We find it qualifying a bottle, a butterfly, a magnet, a calf, fetters, a dream, a spike, a feather, a pilgrimage, and a tress, besides sundry other highly incongruous nouns. Numbers also, especially low ones, are in high favor. We have two women, widows, victories, vocations, lilies, lives, marriages, men, hemispheres, guardians, captains and circuits, clippers, countesses and girls, arrows, admirals, apprentices, brothers, sisters, old maids and young married women, and these by no means exhaust the list. Three is not nearly so much run on: sisters, little maids, days, lieutenants, people, tales, diggers, girls in a flat, and three-cornered hat, almost complete the list. Four destinies, on an island, and sisters (sisters are much in demand), five old friends, six boys, seven daughters, nine days' wonder, ten old maids, and oh, Mrs. Molesworth, how could you call a book "Thirteen Little Black Pigs"? "Out of" gives us such variations as her sphere, the cage, the foam, court, the world, the wreck, and the shadows. "Under" qualifies green apple boughs, sentence of death, lilies and roses, the storm, the waves, Drake's flag, two flags, the deodars, and the greenwood tree. Titles including the word "adventures" are naturally numerous and



varied, comprising those of a dog, a marquess, a donkey, a widow, a brownie, and an attorney. Names of family relations, too, figure prominently: fathers and sons, sons and fathers, parents and children, brothers and sisters, our uncle and aunt, uncles alone of the names of Max, Jack, Ralph, Remus, Silas, and Titus, Father Oswald, Aunt Rachel, Sister Louise, Grandmother Elsie, and, comprehensively, "A Family Affair."

Really it is astonishing what authors will do to "rig out a title-page." The author of "The Giant's Robe" introduces a young novelist as one of his characters in the book, and refers to two of his novels by name. They are not striking or attractive titles, at least not remarkably so: one is "Glamour" and the other "One Fair Daughter." Yet they have both been coolly appropriated by other novelists. Some authors, driven, it would seem, by ignorance, despair, or pure cussedness, seize upon titles already in use: at least "Two Friends" and "Tempest-Tossed" call for four different novels. Others try to improve upon their predecessors: Mr. Grant Allen has "The Devil's Die," and Mr. Le Queux goes him at least one better with "The Devil's Dice." One might congratulate the author of "Two Bad Blue Eyes" on having improved on Mr. Hardy if there were a hint as to whether villany or astigmatism is to be inferred. Antithetical pairs of titles are not unknown, though presumably accidental: one cannot imagine that Mr. Stanley Weyman, when entitling his book "The Man in Black," had any reference to Mr. Wilkie Collins's "The Woman in White," or one might proceed further and assume collusion among three authors with such a result as "Found Dead," "Upside Down," "Who did it?"

There is one fashion of naming books that has utterly disappeared, even as if it had never existed, and that is the style of alliterative titles. Time was when it threatened to establish a tyranny of one in this particular province of the republic of letters. But, most fortunately, like æstheticism, it carried lurking within itself the seeds of burlesque. And just as Gilbert and Sullivan and Du Maurier slew æstheticism at the moment when it was most limp and therefore most robust, just as Swift tranquilly vivisected Partridge the almanac-maker, and Lord Wharton (as he boasted) whistled and sang King James II. out of three kingdoms with "Lillibullero," so did the unknown benefactor who wrote a string of some dozen burlesque alliterative titles save us from this horror. For where is the author bold enough to name his book after such a fashion when its title would instantly call to mind "Tim the Thug, the Terror of the Tartar Temple," or "Arsenic Abe, the Atrocious Assassin of the Arctic Abyss"? Almost any other variation of mismated sounds and carefully cultivated want of invention is open to him, but this one is closed forever.

In conclusion, one may honestly congratulate modern authors of all sorts upon the brevity, at least, of their titles. In these enlightened times no one would be guilty of a "First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regimen of Women." Worse still is "Discovery of a gaping Gulf wherein England is like to be swallowed by another French Marriage," for which Stubbes, the author, was deprived of his

right hand in the presence of a "deeply silent multitude." And, although it is well to avoid extremes, one finds monosyllabic titles preferable to those last mentioned. Let such as cavil at "Quits," "Moths," "Dawn," "She," "Weeds," "Jess," "Jet," "Dreams," or even "Alas," refrain, lest a worse thing happen unto them.

*F. Foster.*

### THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF NURSERY CLASSICS.

IT will be a sorry day for the rising generation if those nineteenth-century realists who are continually clamoring for "Facts! facts!" succeed in banishing from juvenile literature all the dear, more or less imaginative tales and rhymes which have been the joy of whole armies of little men and women for many a century past. "Down with all fairies and hobgoblins," they cry; "Santa Claus is a myth designed to fill the youthful mind with falsehood and foster unbelief; and Mother Goose is a nursery witch who deserves to be burned at the stake."

Heaven defend the poor children from such iconoclasts! For, Heaven knows, the prosaic side of life comes soon enough, and more than dolls are found to be stuffed with sawdust. Surely we need not begrudge our boys and girls the few radiant years when bright Fancy spreads her enchanting glamour over land and sea,—when, for them, the moon is really made of green cheese, each flower is the home of a dainty fay, and the genial spirit of Christmas love and good will is personified in the person of a generous old gentleman who owns the fleetest racers on record.

Parents, however, who have any qualms of conscience on the subject may satisfy themselves by remembering that most of the fables and "Melodies" have a substratum of truth underlying them, while others boasted a lengthy and distinguished pedigree long before that good old lady of Boston town, Dame Goose,—or Vergoose, as was her proper cognomen,—crooned to her children and grandchildren the rhymes and ditties learned during her own childhood in the English fatherland over the water, which her printer son-in-law preserved by gathering them into a volume published under the title "Songs for the Nursery, or Mother Goose's Melodies for Children: Printed by T. Fleet at his printing house, Pudding-Lane, 1719. Price two coppers," and with a long-necked goose with open mouth for frontispiece.

Since then antiquarian societies have not considered the origin of these fantastic verses beneath their attention, but have devoted to them much research; though I believe they have decided it was purely accidental that in 1697, twenty-two years before the American nursery classic appeared, Charles Perrault published in France a collection of French fairy-tales as the "Contes de ma Mère l'Oye" ("Tales of my Mother Goose"). Collin de Planey thus explains the adoption of this name:

"King Robert II. of France took to wife his relative Bertha, but was commanded by Pope Gregory V. to relinquish her and to perform

seven years of penance for marrying within the forbidden degree of consanguinity." He was excommunicated, and shortly after a child was born to the royal pair—a *lusus naturæ*—resembling a deformed duck or goose. The king, struck with horror, immediately repudiated Bertha, and subsequently wedded one Constance, the daughter of a Count of Toulouse.

Now, the divorced wife was reported to have a foot shaped like that of the hissing fowl, so the credulous populace bestowed upon her the nicknames of "Goose-footed Bertha" and "Queen Goose." From this, then, arose among the French a proverbial saying that any incredible tale belongs to the time when "Queen Bertha spun," and they call such a fable "one of Queen Goose's or Mother Goose's stories."

In all the vignettes, too, which illustrate the first editions of Perrault's "*Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*," the garrulous dame is represented as using a distaff and surrounded by a group of children whom she holds entranced by her wondrous recitals. It is extremely doubtful, however, if our poetess laureate of the nursery ever even heard of her French counterpart, and the fact is introduced here only as a curious coincidence.

Certain nursery rhymes Mr. Halliwell classes together as historical. Among these appear,—

What is the rhyme for *porringer*?  
The king he had a daughter fair,  
And gave the Prince of Orange her,—

which is believed to have been written on the occasion of the marriage of an English princess with the young Prince of Orange; and

Little General Monk  
Sat upon a trunk,  
Eating a crust of bread.  
There fell a hot coal,  
And burnt in his clothes a hole;  
Now General Monk is dead,—

referring to George Monk, Duke of Albemarle, who was a famous parliamentary general during the Commonwealth and Protectorate, and later noted for the part he took in bringing about the restoration of the Stuarts.

Another, which with some slight and vulgar variations appears in "*The Jacobite Minstrel*," is,—

William, Mary, George, and Anne,  
Four such children had never a man.  
They put their father to flight and shame,  
And called their brother a shocking bad name,—

and is evidently a hit at William III. and George, Prince of Denmark.

Old King Cole was, likewise, a very ancient British sovereign who flourished in those dark ages about the third century, when fact and fancy seemed so bewilderingly commingled. That he was a "merry

old soul" we can well believe, and it may have been within the great earthwork or amphitheatre still shown at Colchester as "King Cole's Kitchen" that he retired to take his ease, calling for his bowl, and calling for his pipe, and calling for his fiddlers three. This receives more credence when we note that very early editions read,—

Old King Cole,  
He sat in his hole,  
And he called for his fiddlers three.

However that may have been, old chroniclers tell us that he obtained possession of the spot by assuming independence and attacking and taking a Roman colony at Camelodunum, which he named after himself *Cole castrum*, or Cole's camp, and from which it was but a short step to Colchester. To regain this post, the Roman general Constantinus Chlorus laid violent siege to it. Warfare was carried on for three years, when the general, having chanced to behold King Cole's beautiful daughter Helena, made peace with the Britons on the condition that the fair princess be given him in marriage. This was agreed to, and legendary lore asserts that Constantine the Great was the fruit of this union.

It is pretty well known that "The House that Jack Built" was an adaptation of a Chaldee hymn in Sepher Haggadah, symbolical of events in the history of the Hebrew nation. The original commences,—

A kid, a kid, my father bought  
For two pieces of money,  
A kid, a kid.

This has been thus interpreted. The kid—one of the pure animals—denotes the Hebrews; the father who purchased it is Jehovah, who represents himself as holding this relation to the Jews; while the pieces of money signify Moses and Aaron, who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Then came the cat, and ate the kid.

This means the Assyrians, by whom the ten tribes were carried into captivity.

Then came the dog, and bit the cat;

typical of the Babylonians.

Then came the staff, and beat the dog.

The staff represents the Persians.

Then came the fire, and burned the staff.

The fire indicates the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great.

Then came the water, and quenched the fire.

The water here betokens the Roman Empire, the fourth of the great monarchies to whose dominion the Jewish nation was subjected.

And so it continues, introducing the ox, the butcher, and the angel of death, until the concluding stanza, which runs,—

Then came the Holy One, blessed be He!  
 And killed the angel of death,  
 That killed the butcher,  
 That slew the ox,  
 That drank the water,  
 That quenched the fire,  
 That burned the staff,  
 That beat the dog,  
 That bit the cat,  
 That ate the kid,  
 That my father bought  
 For two pieces of money.  
                                     A kid, a kid.

The ox, then, typifies the Saracens, who subdued Palestine and brought it under the Caliphate. The butcher is a symbol of the Crusaders, by whom the Holy Land was wrested from the Saracens. The angel of death is the Turkish power, which took the country from the Franks; while the conclusion is designed to show that God will yet take signal vengeance on the Turks, and, immediately after, restore the Hebrews to their native land, there to live under the government of their long-expected Messiah.

Of less royal origin, but quite as veracious, are some other popular characters in nursery romances. There, for instance, was pretty Bobby Shaftoe, "fat and fair," who played havoc with young ladies' hearts during the last century and was at one time a member of Parliament.

Robert Shaftoe, Esq., belonged to an old and respected family in the north of England. He dwelt at Whitworth, county of Durham, where he was known as "Bonny Bobby," and his portrait represents him as young, handsome, and with yellow hair.

I fear the blond youth was a gay deceiver, for who knows but it was poor little Miss Bellayse of the estate of Brancepeth who first sang,—

Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea,  
 With silver buckles on his knee;  
 When he comes back he'll marry me—  
     Pretty Bobby Shaftoe!

But, alas, he never did, and, if report be true, the young heiress pined away and died for love of him, while he wedded a Miss Anne Duncombe, and left her a widow less than three years later.

There, too, was lank and lean Jack Sprat. It seems he was no less a personage than an archdeacon, and the jingle anent him and his wife has been in vogue for two centuries and more. It originally ran,—

Archdeacon Pratt would eat no fatt,  
 His wife would eat no lean;  
 'Twixt Archdeacon Pratt and Joan his wife,  
 The meat was eat up clean.

But none is to me more interesting than "The Pleasant History of Jack Horner, containing his Witty Tricks and Pleasant Pranks,"

for so is entitled a very old chap-book, carefully preserved in the Bodleian Library. This is a poem of eleven verses, but only one is familiar to us,—that which deals with his Christmas pie; and a tradition of Somersetshire seems best to explain this incident.

It appears—so runs the tale—that an abbot of Glastonbury, hearing that his majesty Henry VIII. had expressed much indignation at the monks daring to build a kitchen which he could not burn down, attempted to appease him. For this purpose, then, he despatched his steward, Jack Horner, to present the sovereign with a suitable bribe. It took the form of a big and tempting-looking pie in which were hidden the transfer deeds of twelve manors,—truly a rich and “dainty dish to set before a king.”

But Master Jack had an eye out for “number one,” and *en route* he lifted the crust and slyly abstracted the deed of the manor of Wells, which, on his return, he informed the abbot had been given him by King Hal. Hence the rhyme,—

Little Jack Horner  
Sat in a corner [of the wagon],  
Eying his Christmas pie;  
He put in his thumb  
And pulled out a plum [the title-deed],  
Saying, “What a brave boy am I!”

Humpty Dumpty, although remembered by a riddle-rhyme the answer to which is “an egg,” is said to have been a bold, bad baron who lived in the days of King John. So, too, the pathetic story of the Babes in the Wood is founded on an actual crime committed in the fifteenth century. The whole history carved upon a mantel-shelf may still be seen in an ancient house in Norfolk.

Rather more vague is the idea that Jack and Jill represent the complete amalgamation of the Saxon and Norman races in the British nation.

To political pasquinades and sectarian differences, also, a host of our nonsense jingles are due, time and change having obliterated their first pungent meaning. One archbishop of Dublin was not far wrong when he made this quotation and comment:

“Old Father Long-legs wouldn’t say his prayers.  
Take him by the right leg,  
Take him by the left leg,  
Take him fast by both legs,  
And throw him down-stairs.”

“There,” remarked his grace, “in that nursery verse you may see an epitome of the history of all religious persecution. Father Long-legs, refusing to say the prayers that were dictated and ordered by his little tyrants, is regarded as a heretic and suffers martyrdom.”

In fact, Mr. John Bellenden Ker, who has delved deep into the subject, evolves most of these rhymes from the squibs of a mob. In this he is often extremely far fetched, but his derivation of the universal favorite Little Bo-Peep is too ingenious to be omitted.



In days of yore, when Charlemagne was oppressing the Saxons on the continent and the Anglo-Saxons held possession of the British Isles, it was a time of hardship for the small farmers and peasants, levied upon and ground down as they were by church sway, to which they imputed fraud and vexation.

The begging friar was rarely welcome when he came to demand donations for the support of the monasteries, though few ventured to refuse. This, then, is the song which was put into the mouths of the monks as they sat over their cups after a successful excursion made by their messenger :

Little Boo-peep !  
 His food is good liquor ;  
 When the cup's drained out,  
 Why, he begs all the quicker.  
 A fig for their grumbling,  
 Love the jolly old dog  
 Who procures for us all  
 Good swipes and good prog !

Boo-peep—according to Mr. Ker—was a familiar name for the limitour or friar sent forth to solicit,—*boo* or *bod* being a contraction of *bode*, a messenger.

Later, then, in poorer times for the monks, they are said to have changed the words to

Little Boo-peep has lost his sheep,  
 And cannot tell where to find 'em ;  
 Let them alone, they'll come home,  
 And bring their tails behind 'em.

From which we may presume that the sheep were the people or spiritual flock, and the tails their contributions for the support of the servants of the Church.

Nursery tales are, as a rule, more imaginative than nursery rhymes, and the majority had their birth and being in the folk-lore and myths of various nations during the early dawn of the ages, when half the world talked in metaphors and parables. Who does not know that Cinderella was really the Egyptian maiden Rhodope, who lived six hundred and seventy years before Christ, and whose tiny sandal was borne off by an eagle as she was bathing in the river? Wise bird, that, to drop the wee shoe right into the lap of King Psammetichus, thereby so exciting the royal admiration and curiosity that he could not rest until the small-footed owner was discovered and made his queen. But the cruel step-sisters are comparatively modern improvements, who made their *début* about the time the eagle was transformed into the fairy godmother and Rhodope became the German's Aschenputtel, or little cinder-wench. The form in which it is best known to-day is the graceful French version of M. Perrault, who has likewise given us Blue-Beard, Little Red Riding-Hood, and Puss in Boots ("Le Chat Botté"). Tom Thumb carries us back to the romantic age of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, when very small dwarfs were by no means unknown, but were kept as pets and playthings by

the wealthy; while Jack the Giant-Killer savors of Thor and Odin, and is an outgrowth of Scandinavian mythology woven into an old nurse's tale and handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

True nursery classics these, that could not harm the most susceptible child, for all either stir the sympathies or teach the overcoming of evil by good. As Sir Walter Scott says, "I would not give one tear shed over Little Red Riding-Hood for all the benefit to be derived from a hundred histories of Jimmy Goodechild. I think the selfish tendencies will be soon enough acquired in this arithmetical age, and that to make the higher class of character, our own wild fictions—like our own simple music—will have more effect in awakening the fancy and elevating the disposition than the colder and more elaborate compositions of modern authors and composers."

I cannot conclude a paper of this character without at least alluding to the one single contribution of note that America has made to this never-dying literature of childhood, and that is the true story of Mary and her Little Lamb. Perhaps it is because of its truth that it has taken such a strong hold upon the popular fancy, for some of the verses are crude enough, written as they were by young John Rollston, a boy student at the same Massachusetts school attended seventy years ago by Mary and her devoted pet. But the poem was completed long after the demise of the sheep, by Mrs. Sarah Hall, a quite celebrated author. That its admirers are legion was shown at a fair in Boston, as many will remember. A stocking knitted from the woven fleece of the famous lamb was unravelled out and pieces sold with the autograph of Mary, then an aged lady, attached; and so great was the demand that one hundred and forty dollars was thus won for the Old South Church.

We who have passed our nursery days and put away the dear infantile classics along with other childish things often feel a glow about the heart as we rehearse for another generation the doughty deeds of the old-time heroes and heroines of the hearthstone, or sing the melodies of the cradle-side songstress. How many of us, too, are constantly proving the sugar-coated wisdom of the ancient rhymes! As the poet says,—

The sports of childhood's roseate dawn  
Have passed from our hearts like the dew-gems from morn.  
We have parted with marbles, we own not a ball,  
And are deaf to the hail of a whoop and a call.  
But there's an old game that we all keep up,  
When we've drunk much deeper from life's mixed cup;  
Youth may have vanished and manhood come round,  
Yet how busy we are on Tom Tiddler's ground,  
Looking for gold and silver!

*Agnes Carr Sage.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH.



**A Desert Drama.**  
By A. Conan Doyle.  
Illustrated.

Few events in contemporary letters bear more weight than the issue of a new novel by Conan Doyle. He is easily first in the domain of story-telling pure and simple, and he is as sure of his art as any master living. He never fails in the one great purpose, the supreme purpose of all good art, namely, to amuse. He is a literary sundial, who marks only the hours of sunshine. The morbid and degenerate do not exist in his healthy atmosphere, peopled by robust men and wholesome women, and any reader who accepts him for cicerone through the African desert will find him as trusty and hearty a guide as in the haunts of Sherlock Holmes.

For *A Desert Drama* takes us up the Nile on "a turtle-bottomed round-bowed stern-wheeler," and lands us, with a very mixed party of tourists, in the wastes of Sahara, bound on donkey-back for Abousir. When we arrive there all goes well with Miss Sadie Adams, of Worcester, Massachusetts, U.S.A., and her admirer, Mr. James Stephens, the lawyer from Manchester, England; with Colonel Cochrane Cochrane, the retired English officer; with Mr. Belmont, of Dublin; with Mr. John H. Headingly, and with Monsieur Fardet—at least things are as well with him as they ever are; with Miss Adams's aunt, who had rather be back in Commonwealth Avenue, Boston; and with the rest of the company, including the Sudanese escort and the donkey-boys. But the gay little party was destined to sudden terror and a long and bitter, though picturesque, experience. As they gazed at the sandy waste about them, a file of Arab horsemen appeared in the distance. Presently there was an exchange of shots, a fearful encounter, in which some of the tourists fell, and finally the survivors were captured by as wicked a band of Arab savages as ever ravaged the sands of Africa.

It would simply disoblige the reader who is going to have the pleasure of perusing the book to reveal any more of the plot. It is an uncommon and a thrilling one, handled by a skilled pen, and made real by a fine masculine fancy, and there are love, courage, humor, and tragedy enough in its scope to furnish forth a whole library of the milk-and-water novels of adventure which one is invited to read. Enter the little company as it leaves the Korosko and you will follow its surprising fortunes to the happy end.

The volume is in keeping with its paternity; it is handsome in type, binding, and paper, and especially rich in its thirty-two illustrations by S. Paget. Other books of Conan Doyle's have been published by the J. B. Lippincott Company, but none has surpassed *A Desert Drama*, which bears their imprint.



**A New Variorum  
Edition of Shake-  
speare. Edited by  
Horace Howard  
Furness. Vol. XI.  
The Winter's Tale.**

To the composition of volumes like those of the *Variorum Shakespeare* so many high qualities are dedicated, so much sincere scholarship, such vast industry, such endless reading and manly patience, that their appearance should be hailed as a marked event in the history of native letters.

In another land and time the author would have received a civic crown. We accept his priceless offering, and feel a glow of pride at his widening fame, but we make no further sign. A work such as the

*Variorum Shakespeare*, now in its eleventh volume, is a corner-stone in the national structure. When their flimsy towers are in decay, a people are remembered by such solid foundations as this.

The present volume, published, like its predecessors, by the Lippincotts, is devoted to one of the loveliest of Shakespeare's romantic plays, *The Winter's Tale*. This is treated by Dr. Furness, as all the previous volumes have been, so that the general reader may have a complete text, untouched by irreverent editing, and the student shall be supplied in a single volume with all that is known or conjectured, or that has been suggested by every scholar of importance who has dealt with the play. There are, besides the textual notes, the commentary, including explanations and criticisms from many sources, and an appendix covering the origin of the plot, the date of the play, and other subjects which have been in dispute.

*The Winter's Tale* has come down to us embodied in uncommon typographic accuracy, and this has aided the present editor to make plain many moot points in plays less carefully printed. He informs us that in the number of apostrophes marking elision in words or letters this play stands unparalleled, and the light thus cast upon Shakespearian diction is of the utmost moment. A subject on which most stress is laid, in empirical criticism of Shakespeare, comes up for treatment in connection with *The Winter's Tale*, and Dr. Furness shows us, with a merry twinkle of mirth, that in giving a sea-coast to Bohemia Shakespeare simply followed his original, Greene, whose novel *Dorastus and Fawnia* furnished the raw material for the play.

Indeed, every shadow of a shade which affects the text in any way here has its due place, and the explanation is not only clear to any understanding, but so suffused is it with the genial spirit of the editor that it takes on a value which no criticism since Coleridge's has ever possessed. If Shakespeare holds the throne, surely Horace Howard Furness sits at his right hand,—the just judge whose opinion fortifies the state.

Blood-Chart. By J.  
Chalmers Da Costa,  
M.D.

Dr. J. Chalmers Da Costa has devised, and the J. B. Lippincott Company has issued, a very useful *Blood-Chart*, which will be found by doctors of the utmost service for recording in the simplest manner and with all necessary detail the condition of the blood. There are spaces provided for percentage and quantity in grammes of hæmoglobin, a color index, specific gravity, number of white and red corpuscles, differential count of white corpuscles and nucleated and deformed red corpuscles, and much other essential information. Each blank covers twenty examinations; and as the chart is the direct outgrowth of Dr. Da Costa's own needs, it is sure to be helpful to his fellow-surgeons.

Lessons in Chem-  
istry. By William  
H. Greene, M.D.  
Revised by Harry  
F. Keller, Ph.D.

The advance in chemical science since 1884 has rendered necessary a new edition of Professor William H. Greene's *Lessons in Chemistry*, which, since its issue in that year, has been a standard text-book. The new edition has been made under the supervision of Professor Harry F. Keller, Ph.D., who succeeded Professor Greene in the chair of chemistry at the Philadelphia High School. Many additions and corrections have been made needful by the introduction of new facts and methods, and the book, while

essentially the same as that excellent compendium of chemistry originally written by Professor Greene, has undergone a thorough revision. No student can afford to neglect this useful, handy, and comprehensive volume, issued by the Lippincotts, as was its predecessor, in a form convenient for study and for the laboratory.

**Therapeutics of Infancy and Childhood.** By A. Jacobi, M.D.

Three years ago it was our pleasure to record the issue of a noble volume by Dr. A. Jacobi, entitled *Therapeutics of Infancy and Childhood*,—Lippincott,—and to predict its instant occupancy of a place in the front rank of medical publications. This prediction has been fulfilled in full measure, and it is now a satisfaction to notice a second edition, based on the first, but thoroughly amended wherever experience or the suggestions of friendly critics have pointed out shortcomings. The aim of Dr. Jacobi, who holds the chair of the Diseases of Children in Columbia University, and is a member of many learned bodies, has been to prepare from the records of his own practice of nearly forty years a book which should have a personal side, while dealing scientifically with the subject in hand. "A large part of the work is devoted to diet and hygiene, and a good deal also to the consideration of the action of medicines," and in this new edition, some chapters of which have been entirely rewritten or enlarged, much explicit discussion of doses of drugs and a number of prescriptions have been added. The main purpose of the volume is to teach, whether it be the beginner or the old practitioner whose remoteness from the centres makes it hard for him to keep up to date, and this purpose has been achieved with the avoidance of verbosity and a clear statement of the innumerable phases of disease involved.

**Miss Balmaine's Past.** By B. M. Croker.

For unalloyed entertainment commend us to novelists like the author of *Miss Balmaine's Past*, which appears this month in the familiar dress of *Lippincott's Series of Select Novels*. There is here nothing roundabout nor indirect, no prosing, and no fine writing. All is frank, undiluted story-telling, and the characters are formed to amuse the reader as they amuse and divert themselves. The pen of B. M. Croker has never created a more charming novel than this which deals with the one love-affair of a beautiful but lonely girl in the remote English village of Horton. Miss Balmaine lived alone with her old grandmother, the last of a stately line somewhat in decay. Saving this aged lady she had neither kith nor kin, nor had she a friend of either sex. But Ronald Gordon, a young engineer, came to the neighborhood in the interest of a projected railway, and when Rosamond Balmaine was pursued by a tramp he saved her, only himself to capture and marry her. They ran away to London and were wedded, then went to Paris for a brief honeymoon, when he started away to Australia to make his fortune. He was wrecked, and appeared no more for years. There was no evidence of the nuptials, and, a child being born, Miss Balmaine's past became a scandal to her mother, who now returned from India with a third husband. How the story ends we must not reveal; but sufficient has been said to show the character of the plot, and the reader must take our word for the delightful quality of the fiction.

**Ray's Recruit.** By  
Captain Charles  
King, U.S.A. Lo-  
tos Library.

The popular *Lotos Library* has deserved its success by including only the choicest fiction, and its high standard is more than maintained in the latest issue by the appearance between its green and buff covers of Captain King's

*Ray's Recruit*. This is a story of soldier-life on the frontier, like many of the captain's previous tales, and those who know him best are best pleased when he writes in his own vein of fighting, bivouacking, and love-making in the far West. To say that the plot is alluring and that the characters are vivid and real is simply to repeat what we have said again and again about books by this author, easily the first in his field. The novelette opens with an admirably drawn picture of the life at a European resort. Handsome men and dashing women, flirtation, gaming, travel, are touched in with the skill of an artist. Then the scene shifts to the frontier in our own land, and the fascinations which centre around all Captain King writes of this daring life take one into their meshes, and he is held till the end of the tale. Truly, it is not a hopeless world which provides such anodynes for the weary mind as these light and diverting books of Captain King's.

**Madam of the Ivies.**  
By Elizabeth  
Phipps Train.

The breezy onrush of a book like *A Social Highwayman* is sure to give it wide popularity, and, both as play and story, few current works of fiction have been more in demand.

The same dash and spirit characterize all the tales of Elizabeth Phipps Train, and in her last book, attractively called *Madam of the Ivies*, and published by the Lippincotts, the movement is delightfully irresistible and contagious.

This is a narrative of the life of Dorothy Lothrop, companion to Madam Eldredge at The Ivies, a remote and lonely country house, whose inmates, saving the stately madam, are rather uncanny. Dorothy finds herself upon entering this service in the midst of an entanglement of mysteries which appall the reader as well as the girl herself; but with a steady feminine nerve and good sense she wins the regard of all those around her, and becomes, one day, *Madam of the Ivies* in her own right. The old madam had a son by a husband who fell over a precipice while on horseback and was killed before her eyes. At a later time she married again, and another son was born. The first fell in love with the beautiful daughter of the madam's housekeeper and married her. The second eloped with his half-brother's wife. This is the main stem of the plot; but its mere statement can give no conception of Miss Train's thrilling story, of her character sketches, or of her talent for the uncanny and bizarre.





# Fat is Necessary

Fat is a necessary constituent of the body. It is the fuel that is changed, within the body, into Force and Energy.

This is well illustrated by the fact that the more force a tissue displays, so much the more is it supplied with fat. For instance, the muscles have three per cent. of fat, the brain eight, and the ever-active nerves as high as twenty-two per cent.

A certain percentage must be maintained in all the tissues of the body, or there will be suffering and disease.

Yet this fat is very frequently wanting.

Scott's Emulsion will supply it, however, in the form of cod liver oil. The oil is made into an Emulsion—that is, digested, ready to enter the blood at once.

Once within the body it is very easily burned, oxidized, and a large amount of force and energy set free.

This force appears to us as Muscular Force, Nervous Force and Digestive Force. It means stronger muscles, steadier nerves and better digestion.

To secure these three exceedingly desirable conditions there is no remedy equal to Scott's Emulsion of cod liver oil with hypophosphites.

**BORN FOR THE PLACE.**—Mother.—“Nothing pleases that child.”  
 Father.—“What a critic he'll make!”—*Town Topics*.

**A GOOD DOG SPOILED.**—The members of the Longbeau Club lay back in their arm-chairs, weary of trying to lay over the beautiful stories that each had sprung in turn on the assemblage, when the door of the smoking-room opened and a brisk young man sauntered in.

“Talking about dogs,” he said, “I had an animal once that was the most intelligent creature you ever——”

“No doubt,” drawled Colonel Liartee. “We'll take all that for granted. But what kind of a dog was he?”

“He was a pointer, gentlemen, a pointer; and many's the pheasant, partridge, and quail that dog has pointed out to me with the most unerring accuracy. Intelligent? Well!”

“Can't you come to the point?” asked another loose figure bundled up in one of the chairs.

“Don't get funny, now. Of course I needn't say that Digit—that was his name, you understand—was always tickled to death to go out gunning with me, but one day I was surprised to observe that he didn't seem to care about the sport at all. He sort of nosed along and acted as if he was ashamed of himself. I was astonished. He wasn't sick, that I could see, but he didn't point any that day, and I returned home disgusted.

“Well, that evening I strolled into the kitchen of my house, and I stumbled across something on the floor. It was a book, belonging evidently to one of the servants. I picked it up, and found the page where it was open was literally dog's-pawed. There was the imprint of Digit's foot on the leaf, as if he had been reading it. Gentlemen, you will doubtless be surprised, but that dog had been reading it. The volume was a hand-book on etiquette, and right there, in large type, were the words,—

“‘It is considered very rude to point.’”—*New York Journal*.

**DEATH HOVERS ALONG THE BANKS.**—The Yellow River, which has been named the “Sorrow of China,” is probably the most destructive stream on the face of the earth. In less than a hundred years it has changed its channel four times, and the point where it empties into the sea has from time to time been moved up and down the coast a distance of three hundred miles. It runs through a vast alluvial plain, and is fed by streams from a great system of mountains in the north. When the snow melting on this range comes at a time of heavy rains the result is sure to be a terrible flood. It has been estimated that in the past three centuries over ten million human beings have perished in the floods of the Yellow River. For destructiveness, both of life and property, this stream is unparalleled, and the *sobriquet* bestowed upon it is amply justified by its history.—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.

**A REMARKABLE TABLE-CLOTH.**—A famous restaurant in Vienna possesses a remarkable table-cloth, on which are inscribed the signatures of the majority of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, the members of the house of Hapsburg, and of a great number of celebrities in art, music, and letters. The names were written on the cloth in pencil, the proprietress of the establishment afterwards carefully embroidering them.—*New York Post*.

## Tune "Peek-a-Boo"

[Old lady]

You say that my cottage is tidy and nice.  
 Why the reason for that you must know.  
 Pray let me at once introduce to your view  
 That treasure - Sapolio!

Chorus: [Young lady]

Sapolio!

[Old lady]

Sapolio!

[Both]

I use Sapolio!

I use Sapolio!

I use Sapolio!

I use Sapolio!



[Old lady]

I am well as noted for neatness and thrift.  
 As well as for beauty you know.  
 And since I first saw my dear face in my pane  
 I've loved my Sapolio!

[Young lady]

Chorus.

Good. Madam, your wits are as bright as your tings.  
 You will pardon my boldness I know.  
 I wonder if that is accounted for too.  
 By the use of Sapolio!

Chorus.

ACCOMMODATING.—The young lady in the sable cloak rushed into the telegraph office and rapped sharply on the counter with the inkstand. The clerk came forward to see what she wanted this time.

"Oh," she said, "let me have that telegram I wrote about fifteen minutes ago. I forgot something very important. I wanted to underscore the words 'perfectly lovely' in acknowledging the receipt of that bracelet. Will it cost anything extra?"

"No, ma'am," said the clerk, as he handed her the message.

The young lady drew two heavy lines beneath the words, and said,—

"It's awfully good of you to let me do that. It will please Charlie so much."

"Don't mention it," said the clerk. "If you would like, I will put a few drops of nice violet extract on the telegram at the same rates."

"Oh, thank you, sir. You don't know how much I would appreciate it. I'm going to send all my telegrams through this office. You are so obliging."

And the smile she gave him would have done any one good to have seen, with the possible exception of Charlie.—*Detroit Free Press*.

THE reformers of the English church in 1549 struck out nearly a hundred holidays, leaving only such as in their time were dear to the popular heart.

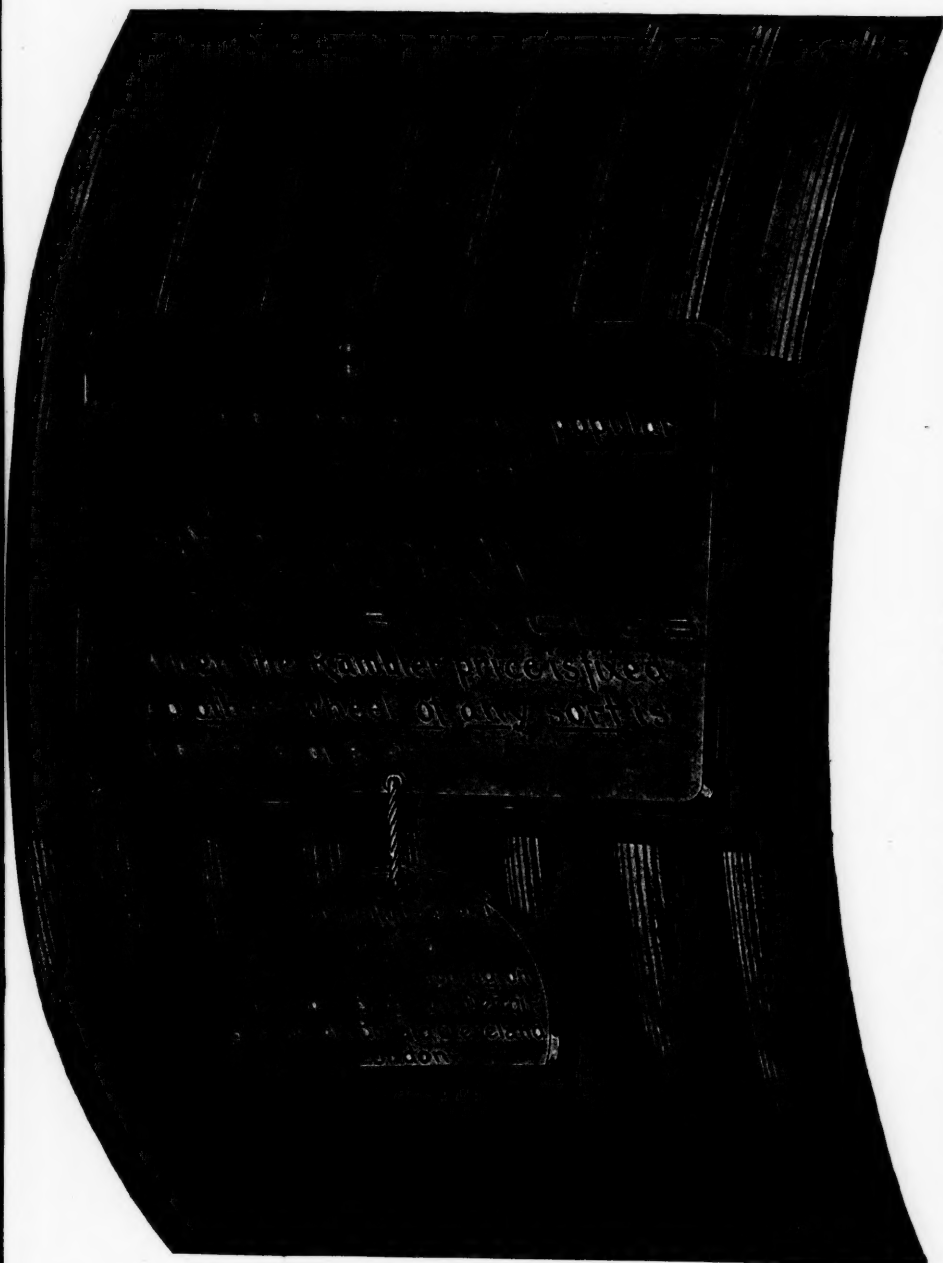
SHE REALIZED.—"Amelia Sassafraz," said Marcellus Roddy, with an accent of pain in his rich voice, "do you realize the anguish you have caused me by your refusal of my heart and hand? No, you are cold and passionless: you realize nothing."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Roddy," said Amelia, haughtily. "Do you remember the ring you gave me, and the opera-glasses, and the bracelets, and the gold thimble?"

"I do remember them," moaned the wretched young man.

"Well," said Amelia, "I have realized on them all. I give you the pawn-tickets and this bundle of letters. Farewell forever, Mr. Roddy."—*Pearson's Weekly*.

IS A VIOLENT DEATH PAINFUL?—Severe injuries to the body are seldom very painful at first. The severity of the nervous shock seems to paralyze the nerve-centre where consciousness of pain is situated, and in fatal cases there is often no sense of pain, even when death is delayed a day or two. In such cases it may be supposed that the shock not only paralyzes but even destroys the nerve-centre. It may be compared to a lightning-flash along the telegraph wires, which, although of the same nature as the electric telegraph current, yet is so intense as to destroy the receiving instruments, so that no subsequent messages can be received. In some fatal injuries the nerve that would carry the pain to the brain is destroyed, and such accidents are almost painless. Our sense of pain is greatest in the skin, and deep wounds are therefore not more painful than shallow ones. In surgical operations the skin incision is often the most painful part, and those who have been run through the body say they were conscious only of something cold passing through them, with just a prick at the points of entry and exit of the weapon. On the other hand, some fatal injuries are very painful, especially those that interfere with breathing, such as injuries to the chest and throat.—*New York Advertiser*.



**THE CHAFING-DISH.**—A Bostonian complains that the chafing-dish is an overrated institution, not to say a humbug, as far as cooking is concerned, and there are those who after several years of experiment with it are induced to agree with him. This critic maintains that not even a Welsh rabbit can be wholly prepared in a chafing-dish, for the toast has to be made elsewhere, and lobster must be cooked first and somewhere else before it can be stewed into the Newburg delight.

**THE DISCOMFORTS OF WAR-SHIPS.**—A well-known admiral has asserted that, even with a moderate gale and sea, an armor-plated cruiser, if going against the wind, will find herself in conditions similar to those of a storm; at least the crew will have that impression.

The movements of the stern of the ship are violent and very disagreeable. The waves, pushed by the advancing prow, sweep continually over the ship from bow to stern. All windows and port-holes must be closed, and air reaches the lower decks, when the heat increases unbearably, only through artificial ventilators. With the exception of the specially protected command bridge, all the uncovered portions of the ship are impassable. Thus the whole crew must bear as well as they can the inferno of the closed decks.

In such a ship no one can feel comfortable, and when there is a storm in which a sailing-ship would feel comparatively at ease the crew of an armor-plated ship imagines itself to be in a heavy hurricane which threatens destruction at every minute.

The long, narrow fore part of the ship—which is not borne lightly by the water and is rendered extremely heavy by the ram and the armored deck and the cannon and torpedoes—forces the ship in a high sea to pitchings and rollings which are of a kind that cannot be described.—*Pearson's Weekly*.

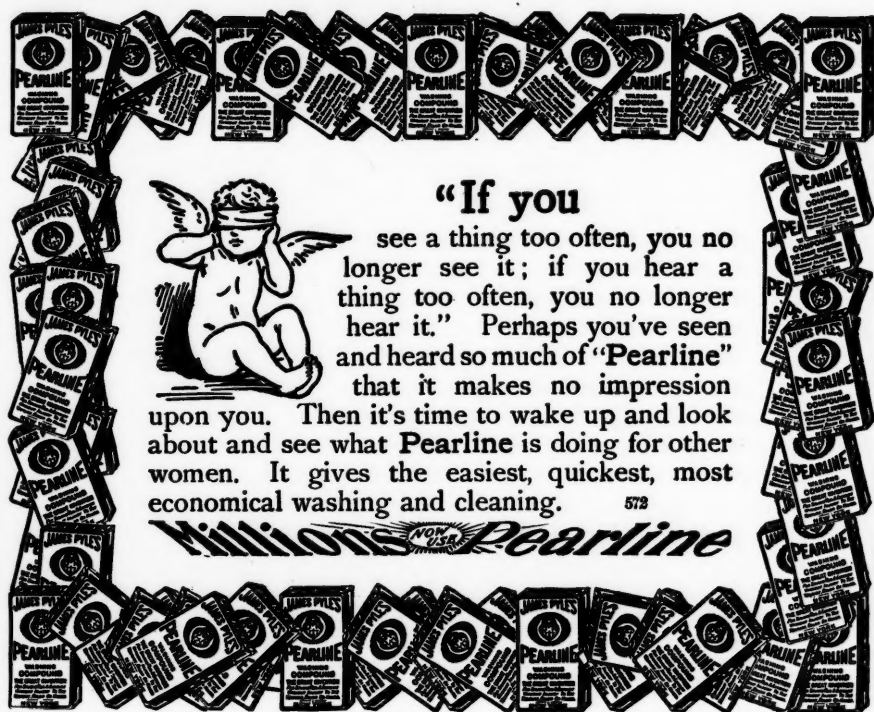
**JUSTLY RELIEVED FROM JURY DUTY.**—"You wish to be relieved from jury duty," said a judge, "but you haven't given a good reason."


"It is to save money for the people," replied the unwilling talesman. "I have dyspepsia, judge, and I never agree with anybody. If I go on the jury there will be a disagreement, and the county will have to go to the expense of a new trial."

"Excused," said the judge.—*Green Bag*.

**THE IMP HOAX.**—This brazen imposture on the credulity of the English public was the result of a wager between the Duke of Montague and another nobleman in 1749. In discussing the amazing gullibility of the English people, the former declared that if one were to advertise it well that he would jump into a quart bottle, all London would go to see him do it. The wager being made, an advertisement was inserted in all the leading papers, promising that the feat would be performed on a certain date at the Haymarket theatre. On the appointed day the theatre was packed from pit to dome, and many hundreds were turned from the doors. The supposed magician appeared on the stage and had the temerity to state that if the audience would pay double the price he would enter a pint bottle, shown on the stage table, instead of the quart flask as furnished. He then hurriedly escaped by the stage door. A riot resulted, in which the theatre was badly wrecked, and the duke and his companion had to leave town until the excitement was well over.—*Baltimore American*.







**"If you** see a thing too often, you no longer see it; if you hear a thing too often, you no longer hear it." Perhaps you've seen and heard so much of "Pearline" that it makes no impression upon you. Then it's time to wake up and look about and see what **Pearline** is doing for other women. It gives the easiest, quickest, most economical washing and cleaning. 573

*Millions NOW USE Pearline*

## PROVIDENT LIFE AND TRUST CO. OF PHILADELPHIA.

Attention is directed to the new Instalment-Annuity Policy of the Provident, which provides a fixed income for twenty years, and for the continuance of the income to the widow for the balance of her life, if she should survive the instalment period of twenty years.

In everything which makes Life Insurance perfectly safe and moderate in cost, and in liberality to policy-holders, the Provident is unsurpassed.

**RECALLED STORMY TIMES.**—"Well, that looks natural," said the old soldier, looking at a can of condensed milk on the breakfast table in place of ordinary milk that failed on account of the storm. "It's the Gail Borden Eagle Brand we used during the war."

**ROSA BONHEUR'S DAILY LIFE.**—"My life is that of a peasant," writes Rosa Bonheur in a story of her life in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. "I wake with the day and lie down to sleep almost at nightfall. Early in the morning I stroll in the garden with my dogs or drive my pony-cart through the forest at Fontainebleau [in the midst of which is her estate]. Towards nine o'clock I take my seat before the easel, and work until half-past eleven o'clock. Then I breakfast quite simply, and afterwards smoke my cigarette as I run through the daily papers. I resume my work at one o'clock, and at five I go out for a walk. I love to see the sun sink behind the trees of the forest. My dinner is as simple as my breakfast. I finish the day by reading. The books I prefer are those of travel, hunting, or historical works. Often I read the Bible.

"Before commencing a picture I study my subject exhaustively, prefacing this work with conscientious studies from nature. I look for the exact sky and the exact ground, and not until then do I commence work on the canvas. The ever-present desire to bring myself nearer to truth, and an incessant research after simplicity, are my two guides. I have never grown tired of study. It is to-day, and has been during my whole life, a happiness to me, for it is with persistent work alone that we can approach the unsolvable problem of ever-changing nature, the problem which more than any other elevates our soul and entertains in us thoughts of justice, of goodness, of charity."

**MAN'S ANCESTORS.**—We can point now to the long-since extinct ancestors of the lowest vertebrates; we are able to introduce all the reptiles, the birds, and the mammals to their primitive prototypes; in the mammals, particularly, gap after gap which seemed to separate species and genera and orders has been successfully spanned by the discovery of intermediate forms; and we have now the genealogical trees of the deer, musk, horse, tapir, rhinoceros, cat, lemurs, monkey, and many others. And yet as regards the pedigree of man we are still in the dark. Professor Huxley's impressive words still hold. Palæontology sheds no light on man's origin or his last pithecoïd parents; for "so far as that light is bright it shows him substantially as he is now, and when it grows dim it permits us to see no sign that he was other than he is now."

Missing links to connect the human species with the demonstrated evolutionary law of the world of life and matter are quoted, of course. But it seems well-nigh impossible to prove that an alleged link is anything more than an extreme instance of some particular type. And it is pretty certain that if missing links exist they must be sought for in a period much farther back than we are at present able to explore.—*Science Siftings*.

**TOOK A DOLLAR FOR A HEN-ROOST.**—An old ducky was arrested for stealing a silver dollar. The dollar was found on his person and produced in court.

"You stole this money?" asked the judge.

"Dat's whut dey says, suh."

"Well, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Well, suh, nuttin' much, 'ceptin' dat I wuz driv ter it."

"Driven to it?"

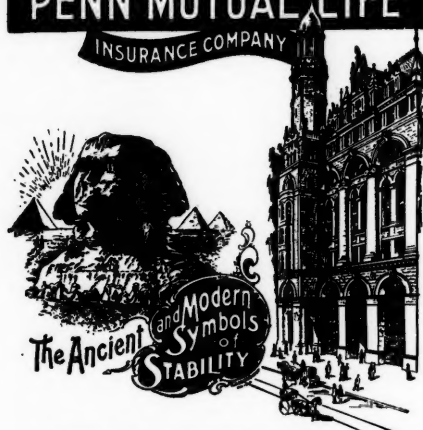
"Yes, suh. You see, jedge, dat dollar had a bird on it, en it look so much like a game chicken dat I thought I wuz in a hen-roost, en des nachully bagged it."—*Atlanta Constitution*.

## ENDURING ALWAYS

THE

## PENN MUTUAL LIFE

INSURANCE COMPANY



The best forms of modern life insurance furnished by members to members at cost. A mutual organization having 60,000 members; assets over \$31,000,000; surplus over \$3,500,000. Address for publications including sample policies. We pay postage.

921-3-5 Chestnut St., Philadelphia

**ARE YOU TO LIVE IN ALASKA?**—The universal article of diet in that country, depended upon and indispensable, is bread or biscuit. And to make the bread and biscuit, either in the camp or upon the trail, yeast cannot be used,—it must be baking powder; and the powder manufactured by the processes of the Royal Baking Powder Company, miners and prospectors have learned, is the only one which will stand in that peculiar climate of cold and dampness and raise the bread and biscuit satisfactorily.

These facts are very important for every one proposing to go to Alaska and the Yukon country to know, for should he be persuaded by some outfitter to take one of the cheap brands of baking powder, it will cost just as much to transport it, and then when he opens it for use, after all his labor in packing it over the long and difficult route, he will find a solid caked mass or a lot of spoiled powder, with no strength and useless. Such a mistake might lead to the most serious results. Alaska is no place in which to experiment in food or try to economize with your stomach. For use in such a climate, and under the trying and fatiguing conditions of life and labor in that country, everything must be the best and most useful, and above all it is imperative that all food supplies shall have perfect keeping qualities. It is absurd to convey over such difficult and expensive routes an article that will deteriorate in transit, or that will be found when required for use to have lost a great part of its value.

There is no better guide to follow in these matters than the advice of those who have gone through similar experience. Mr. McQuesten, who is called "the father of Alaska," after an experience of years upon the trail, in the camp, and in the use of every kind of supply, says, "We find in Alaska that the importance of a proper kind of baking powder cannot be overestimated. A miner with a can of bad baking powder is almost helpless in Alaska. We have tried all sorts, and have been obliged to settle down to use nothing but the

Royal. It is stronger and carries further at first, but above all things, it is the only powder that will endure the severe climatic changes of the Arctic region."

It is for the same reasons that the United States government in its relief expeditions, and Peary, the famous Arctic traveller, have carried the Royal Baking Powder exclusively.

The Royal Baking Powder will not cake nor lose its strength either on board ship or in damp climates, and is the most highly concentrated and efficient of leavening agents. Hence it is indispensable to every Alaskan outfit. It can be had of any of the trading companies in Alaska, but should the miner procure his supplies before leaving, he should resist every attempt of the outfitter to palm off upon him any of the other brands of baking powder, for they will spoil and prove the cause of great disappointment and trouble.

TRIBULATIONS OF A HOUSE-BUILDER.—"I believe that there should be some kind of a university or night school to teach men how to buy lots and build houses," declared a citizen who is finally settled in his new home. "More than that, there should be a law making this kind of an education compulsory, and a searching examination before any one be given a license to spend his money in land and building.

"I've been through it, and I'm talking by the card. After I had purchased my lot I was jumped on for some back taxes, had to settle with an heir that hadn't joined in the deed, and pay a paving-assessment. I was advised by a friend that my best scheme was to make a separate contract for each kind of work to be done, and then be on hand as much as possible to see that nothing was neglected. The result was that I lost a whole summer, took care of two or three rows a day, listened to expensive suggestions, and in the end paid out one thousand dollars more than my most liberal calculation had provided for. Then I wasn't nearly as well satisfied as with my original plans.

"While the moving-vans were unloading at the door, my wife was bustling about in one of woman's most delightful occupations, and the children were rolling under the trees in the back yard, along came a man who called me aside and informed me that I had built on his lot.

"As I was not armed, he escaped with his life, and we called each other names across the street till I cooled down sufficiently to hold a peaceful parley. He was right. My pretty new house adorned his lot. I was a squatter. He had me just because I had carelessly ignored the abstract man and the surveyor. I would have heard from him sooner, but he had been away. He was white, and gave me a deed to the lot in exchange for a deed to the next lot, which I had really purchased."—*Detroit Free Press*.

AN ODD MARRIAGE CUSTOM.—The people of Lithuania believe in being forearmed for emergency. At least so a curious custom in regard to the marriage ceremony would seem to indicate. It is said that just before the marriage is celebrated the mother of the bride gives her daughter a parting maternal box on the ears in the presence of a number of witnesses. The reason for this remarkable proceeding is that if the wife should at any time wish to secure a divorce she would have the plea that physical force was used to make her enter the bonds of matrimony.

"I have been keeping house for over five years, and during that time could not find a soap that gave me entire satisfaction as to results until I tried your Dobbins Floating-Borax Soap.  
H. T. FRENCH, Cleveland, Ohio."

"We have used your Dobbins Electric Soap in our household for years, and have found nothing like it in the market that can take its place.  
(Miss) A. E. DUPLESSIS, Northborough, Mass."

"We have given your Dobbins Floating-Borax Soap a trial, and find it highly satisfactory. We use it in the kitchen, bath, and laundry.  
MRS. CAROLINE GENE, Cleveland, Ohio."

"Since I found out the good quality of your Dobbins Electric Soap, I have not and will not use any other in my family. It gives entire satisfaction if used according to directions.  
MRS. WM. ULMER, Chicago, Ill."

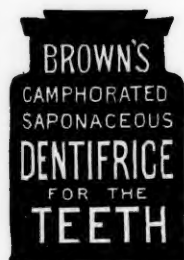
"I cannot speak too highly of your Dobbins Floating-Borax Soap. I use it for both washing and toilet. I have not had a cake of any other soap in the house since I started to use it.  
MRS. MARION L. HORTON, Yonkers, N.Y."

Price has been reduced on the original old-fashioned Dobbins Electric Soap, so that it can now be bought at eight cents a bar, two bars for fifteen cents. Quality same as for last thirty-three years, "BEST OF ALL." Ask your grocer for it. No one has *ever* found fault with its quality; no one can *now* find fault with its price. It stands as it has for thirty-three years, in a class by itself, as to quality, purity, and economy, but is now in class with others as to price. Beautiful presents for wrappers.

It is the original Electric, and is guaranteed to be worth four times as much as any other soap ever made. For washing anything, from the finest lace to the heaviest blanket, it is without a peer. Only follow directions.

**READ CAREFULLY** all that we say on the two wrappers around the soap, and then see for yourself whether or not you can afford to ever use any other soap than this, after having heard its own story, told you by your own test of it.

**DOBBINS SOAP MANUF'G COMPANY,**  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.



**THE BEST TOILET LUXURY AS A DENTIFRICE IN THE WORLD.**

**TO CLEANSE AND WHITEN THE TEETH,**

**TO REMOVE TARTAR FROM THE TEETH,**

**TO SWEETEN THE BREATH AND PRESERVE THE TEETH,**

**TO MAKE THE GUMS HARD AND HEALTHY,**

**USE BROWN'S CAMPHORATED SAPONACEOUS DENTIFRICE.**

Price, Twenty-Five Cents a Jar.

For Sale by all Druggists.

**CONSUMPTION CURED.**—An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who wish it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, upon addressing, with stamp, naming this Magazine, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, New York.

**HOW AN INDIAN DIED.**—A resident of Little Rock, who passed through the territory of the Chickasaw Nation recently, tells through the *Washington Post* of the execution of a young Indian for violation of the laws of his tribe. Among the Chickasaws stealing is punishable by death, and it seems that this young buck had been thrice convicted of larceny. The chief of the tribe, who alone could save him, refused a pardon, and there was nothing to do but carry out the sentence. The condemned man was placed in a wagon and driven to a graveyard just east of the little village where he had been tried. He descended from the wagon and with stoical demeanor walked to where his grave had been freshly dug, and surveyed it with apparent unconcern. Then he knelt and prayed with a preacher who had known him from boyhood. Arising, he walked firmly to the head of his grave, where he took his seat upon a large stone, facing death with a courage that seemed sublime. After saying a few words, in which he advised all young men of his race to take warning and lead honest lives, he was blindfolded, and a second later the sharp report of a dozen Winchester rang out, and his earthly existence was ended.

THE oldest medical recipe is said by a French medical journal to be that of a hair tonic for an Egyptian queen. It is dated 400 B.C., and directs that dogs' paws and asses' hoofs be boiled with dates in oil.

**BLenheim PALACE.**—The late Duke of Marlborough, in alluding to the size of Blenheim Palace, used to say by way of a joke that it was the only residence in Europe which required eight hundred pounds' worth of putty a year to keep the window-panes in order.

Money went a good deal further in the last century than it does now. Consequently, when the House of Commons voted three hundred thousand pounds to build the first duke a residence, there presently sprang up an edifice three hundred and forty-eight feet long and with an interior so vast that when a government messenger once came post-haste there to the late Lord Randolph Churchill, during one of his visits, with a despatch, it was over half an hour before his lordship—who for exercise had been exploring the place, with its fifteen staircases—was found.

The last time it was repaired the late duke was obliged to apply to Parliament for permission to sell the pictures and library to pay the bills, which amounted to more than a million and a half. It is therefore not surprising that, although the estate yielded forty thousand pounds a year, the expenses of keeping up this preposterous residence kept the duke a poor man. Altogether, everything about Blenheim is grotesquely large. Some of the pictures are seventy feet square. The statue of the great duke near the big lake of two hundred and sixty acres is one hundred and thirty-two feet high, and cost thirty thousand pounds.—*Pearson's Weekly*.

**CONCLUSIVE PROOF.**—"Ellen, has George come home from school yet?" called Mrs. Snaggs to her servant.

"Yes, ma'am," came back the answer.

"Where is he?"

"I haven't seen him."

"How do you know, then, that he's home?"

"Because the cat's a-hidin' under the dresser."—*Exchange*.



**AN EPICUREAN DELIGHT.**—The originator of Pim-Olas is a benefactor in the high art of gastronomy.

He imparts a new sense of enjoyment to the jaded, and rejuvenates the appetite which a surfeit of good things has impaired.

Pim-Olas appeal to all tastes, but especially to those which have been educated to the highest degree of intelligent appreciation.

Pim-Olas are a happy combination of finest Spanish Queen Olives with the pits extracted and stuffed with Pimientos, together with a most delicious sauce, specially devised, and a secret of the manufacturers.

They have become an actual necessity in all cultured and refined households, and their sale is increasing at an extraordinary rate.



For Children While Cutting Their Teeth.

An Old and Well-Tried Remedy,

FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS.

## MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

has been used for over FIFTY YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING, with PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SOFTENS the GUMS, ALLAYS all PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHOEA. Sold by Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for **Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup**, and take no other kind.

**TWENTY-FIVE CENTS A BOTTLE.**

**ART IN THE HOME.**—A taste for art shown in the form of pictures is as universal as the love of music, and no home is so poor but that it may be brightened and adorned in these modern days by examples of the work of worthy and even famous painters.

There was a time, however, not very long ago, before science and the genius and skill of the printer came to the aid of the public, when a beautiful picture could only furnish pleasure and instruction to the few; when only those who were able to pay large prices for the exclusive possession of some masterpiece to hang in a private gallery, or those who could visit the public galleries of our great cities, were able to enjoy the work of the best artists. Nowadays, by the aid of photography and the skilful use of color in printing, excellent copies of some of the best work of contemporary painters are being put within easy reach of every one.

The reign of the crude, highly colored and badly drawn lithograph of old, whose purpose was to force attention by its very exaggeration and unnaturalness, is about over. Our taste in these matters has been developed beyond this phase of every-day art, and we are not content now with anything much short of the best that is being done in oil and water-color.

There are apparently no other reasons than the great expense involved and the inability to do the best work—unless it be even the more potent and characteristic one of lack of taste—for the multiplication of vulgar and commonplace pictures to call public attention to any article of commerce. One concern that has emphasized this fact in a way quite apart from any advertising motive, and that deserves to be especially commended as contributing to the work of cultivating a wholesome idea of good art, is the Procter & Gamble Company, of Cincinnati, the makers of Ivory Soap, whose "It floats" has been a household phrase for so many years. No other company that we know of has gone so far in the direc-

tion of giving its patrons the best reproductive art that can be had. The beautiful and delicately colored copies of paintings in oil and water-color that they distribute are as fine as any that can be produced. Such well-known illustrators and painters as W. T. Smedley, the late C. S. Reinhart, Irving R. Wiles, Leon and Percy Moran, Francis Day, W. Granville Smith, and Alice Barber Stephens are among those whose work is attainable through their liberality. It seems needless to say that this means an outlay upon their part commensurate with the quality of the work, and when it is known that they publish between four and five million copies of one painting, some idea of the magnitude and cost of this mere adjunct of their vast enterprise is suggested. A comparison of their beautiful color prints with other work in a similar direction will at once make it evident that the process employed is entirely different from any of the other so-called fac-simile methods so much in vogue, and that usually entirely miss those fine gradations of color value and tone that are so essential to the faithful rendering and preservation of the distinctive characteristics of the original paintings. The Procter & Gamble Company, not satisfied with the resources at hand, sent a man to Europe to study thoroughly the famous French and German color processes, and in addition have had most thorough tests made at their own expense, with the purpose of perfecting and modifying the ordinary ways of preparing electrotypes and process plates. Fully to appreciate the beauty and art value of these color prints, one of them need only to be put in a simple frame with an appropriate gilt mat.

Even the best of paintings lose something of their impressiveness apart from the frame in which most of us see them, either in the public gallery or in the private house.

**HIS TURNING-POINT IN LIFE.**—"I encountered the strangest man I ever knew while I was doing some government work in Missouri," said the retired contractor. "He was smart enough, so jolly that every one liked him, and apparently in the best of health. But he made a few bad deals,—had to mortgage some of his property, and seemed to throw up his hands. He vowed that he had ceased to be his own man, and would drift along till he found out what the world wanted to do with him.

"He never tried to dispose of any of his possessions by auction or private sale, but nearly every day held a raffle at which the chief attractions were his jokes and odd sayings. All this time he was not trying to earn a dollar, and in a year or so it was thought that he had come to the end of his string.

"When he disposed of the family clock, and there seemed to be nothing left, he coolly announced that the next day he would raffle himself. He didn't know whether the boys would care to buy chances, but he meant business, and would work faithfully for the man who drew him. Tickets sold for good figures, but there were two left, and he laughingly said that he would take a couple of shots at himself. When the drawing came off he held the lucky number.

"Well, sir, the fellow turned loose and went to making money hand over hand. He became one of the greatest rustlers in the West, paid off the mortgages, bought everything there was money in, and is as rich now as a river-bottom farm. When he drew himself at the raffle he made up his mind that he was his own man again, and, besides, he had agreed to do his best for the winner. It was a strange case."—*Detroit Free Press.*

# M E R I E L.

*A LOVE STORY.*

BY

AMÉLIE RIVES,

AUTHOR OF "THE QUICK OR THE DEAD?" "BARBARA DERING,"  
"A DAMSEL ERRANT," ETC.

---

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

*Proverbs xxix. 18.*

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

---

Copyright, 1898, by J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

---

PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.